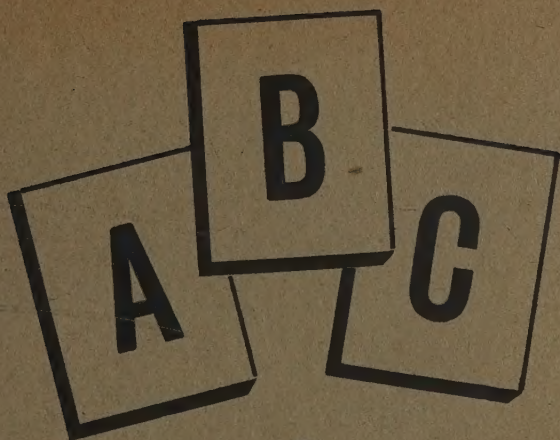




of

CHAIRMANSHIP

by

SIR WALTER CITRINE, K.B.E.

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A · B · C of CHAIRMANSHIP

All About Meetings
: and Conferences :

by

SIR WALTER CITRINE, K.B.E.

GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE BRITISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

MDCCCCXXXIX

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Preface

Some years ago I wrote a Handbook called "The Labour Chairman" which dealt with the methods of conducting meetings.

The title was rather restrictive as it gave the impression that the book was only of value to Labour bodies. In the present work, I have revised and considerably extended the text so as to make the book applicable to almost any form of meeting.

I have consulted most of the authoritative works on the subject, including Sir Erskine May's "Parliamentary Practice," Palgrave's "Chairman's Handbook," Gore Brown's "Handbook on Joint Stock Companies," Sir Courtenay Ilbert's "Manual of Procedure of the House of Commons," and several old books, among them J. W. Smith's "Handy Book of Public Meetings," from which the diagram of procedure in Appendix "B" is taken.

I have avoided reference to authorities as much as possible as this is a tiresome process, but the reader may take it that the procedure laid down is quite authoritative. Wherever there is the slightest doubt, I have indicated this in the text.

Whilst it is not claimed that the book deals with everything involved, it is an attempt to present the subject simply, adequately and accurately.

October, 1939.

WALTER CITRINE.

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CHAPTER ONE

Paragraphs 1—16

Preliminary Arrangements

Breaks the subject gently with a few preliminary matters, discusses the rules of debate, shows why standing orders are necessary, how to convene a meeting and appoint a Chairman, and other matters more or less relevant.

1—Introductory

"I wish I knew more about this business." Many a time that utterance has fallen from the poor victim who finds himself occupying the chair at some meeting or other. He may be a member of a political party, a co-operative society, a trade union, a club, or an association of any kind, on whom the hand of fate has descended and flung him ruthlessly into the seat of authority. Perhaps you who are reading this may some day be put in that position. You wouldn't want to get into a mess and find yourself being put right by some of the deadheads who have firmly declined to be pressed into service. You would want to know how to do the job properly, and it is our purpose to tell you. In the process we may have to explain things which seem somewhat remote to you, but if you will only be patient you will find it will all be of service. It may seem a bit complicated at first, but an occasional glance at the summary which follows every chapter will help to keep the essentials in mind. If you want to refer quickly to some point, have a peep at the index at the back of the book. We have arranged it so that you can see pretty clearly what to do. Glance at it now and you will see what we mean.

2—Rules of Debate

The most nebulous phrase a newly-initiated member in a society encounters is the *rules of debate*. Time and time again he hears speakers at meetings use the phrase, until he imagines that there are certain laws which have been passed by Parliament and which lay down the methods by which meetings *must* be conducted. Let us assure him that so far as the general run of meetings is concerned it is not so. In the case of the meetings of public authorities and limited companies, Parliament does specify what can

and cannot be done. But there are very few regulations in law which prescribe the manner in which such meetings must be conducted.

3—No Legal Code

But although there is no *legal code* of rules which applies to all kinds of meetings, there are certain methods which are generally adopted by public and other bodies in this country. The principal debating chamber in this country, or "talking shop" as unkindly critics call it, is the House of Commons. The British Parliament is the oldest in the world, and during the centuries of its existence it has gained a lot of experience as to how its business should be conducted. It has framed a code called the "Rules of Procedure" for the conduct of the public business in the House of Commons. Many of these rules seem very intricate and difficult to outsiders, and sometimes even Members are not too clear about them. They have been specially designed to serve the purpose of the House of Commons itself and were never intended to be adopted in their entirety by other bodies.

4—Adapting Parliamentary Rules

This does not mean that none of these rules are suitable for use elsewhere. Far from it. Most of the rules of procedure used by public authorities are based upon the rules which govern the debates in the House of Commons. Other bodies, too, form more or less complete codes of standing orders, as they are called, which, although following the rules of the House of Commons in general, have been varied by the society concerned to suit its own special requirements. Therefore, when we speak of the "Rules of Debate" we are really thinking of the customs and practices which are in general use and which do not vary very much from one society to another.

5—*Necessity for Definite Rules*

It would be, however, unbusinesslike for any organisation to rely merely upon a general custom or practice, well-established though such customs might seem. Disputes do arise in meetings as to what the general custom is. Even in the House of Commons, where the procedure is so carefully laid down, differences frequently occur as to the correct interpretation of certain rules. One Member has one idea as to what a rule means, while another may hold quite a contrary view. Often enough the Speaker (who presides over the House) is forced, because of these divergencies of opinion, to give a ruling on points of procedure. How much worse would it be, therefore, if no rules existed. Clearly it is in the interests of efficiency that some definite code of rules should be drawn up by every society for the guidance of its own members.

6—*The Standing Orders*

Consequently, most organisations which hold periodical meetings, arrange a set of rules prescribing in detail the manner in which *their* meetings shall be conducted. These rules are called "standing orders," and it should be one of the first duties of any organisation to arrange such a code. Yet there is a surprisingly large number of trade unions and other bodies who have not yet taken this step. Even in cases where they have done so, the standing orders are not as complete as they should be. If you are a member of a society which has not yet drawn up its own code, urge that it should do so. Such a code as we give in Appendix "A" will serve as a basis. Persuade your members to consider this code, and insert such modifications as may be found necessary. Then take such measures as are in accordance with the constitution of your society to make the standing orders binding upon the members.

7—Avoid Rigidity

Circumstances may arise from time to time which will make it indispensable that the standing orders should not be applied too rigidly. Provision is usually made in the standing orders themselves to meet such an emergency. Generally they provide that in special circumstances the standing order or orders may be suspended. We shall deal with this more fully later. At the moment we are concerned only to show how necessary it is that some code of standing orders should be adopted by every society to regulate the way in which its meetings are conducted.

8—The Chairman Presides

The standing orders usually (but not always) prescribe the way in which the Chairman shall be appointed. Where it is not done by standing order, the constitution or rules of the society will lay down the procedure. Sometimes he is called the president because he is chosen to preside, or sit in authority over others. We shall call him the Chairman throughout the book. It is obvious that every meeting *must* have a Chairman. A meeting without a Chairman is like a ship without a steersman, which would drift about aimlessly and in all probability would find itself sooner or later on the rocks. Someone must be put at the helm, and entrusted to guide its course. That is the job the Chairman is appointed to do. His duty is to preside over the meeting and to see that the business is transacted in a proper manner.

9—Appointment of Chairman

The Chairmen of trade unions, co-operative societies, political parties and such-like bodies, which have regular meetings, are usually elected at the annual or quarterly meetings. They officiate for three, six or twelve months, in accordance with the rules of the body concerned. In such cases it is only necessary

to elect a temporary Chairman in the event of the regular Chairman being absent and no vice or deputy-Chairman being available. There are occasions, however, where people are called together for a special purpose who have never met together before, so they must appoint their own Chairman. Should this necessity arise, the person who has convened the meeting should take charge temporarily and ask for nominations. He or some person present may propose that "Mr. Firmhand shall take the chair." Another person will second this, and if there are no other names put forward those present will thereupon vote and Mr. Firmhand will be declared elected. If more than one person is proposed, the names must be put to the vote of the meeting. He who secured the highest number would be elected. The procedure is fully described in Chapter Eight.

10—Notice Convening the Meeting

Let us now consider the procedure to be followed at meetings of established bodies, whose members come together at regular periods." It is sometimes necessary for a summons to be sent out by the secretary calling the members to a meeting. In the case of limited liability companies and public bodies, the law makes it imperative that certain kinds of meetings can only be held after the members have been duly summoned and given some days' notice. Even where the law does not provide this, it is a general practice always where special meetings are concerned to send out a summons. A summons is a short statement urging the importance of the meeting and requesting the members to attend.

11—Notice Not Always Necessary

In the case of bodies whose meetings take place at regular intervals of a week or a fortnight or so, it is not necessary to send out a summons, except in the

case of quarterly meetings, when election of officers and other important business is to be transacted. Where a meeting of an executive body or the central authority of an organisation is concerned, it is usual to send out written notices of the meeting even though this takes place at regular periods. This is merely a wise precaution to ensure full attendance. Co-operative societies exhibit such a notice in their offices and stores for all ordinary meetings. Regular branch or lodge meetings of trade unions are usually advertised on members' contribution cards or in their rule books, and in this way they are given notice of all regular meetings. We may take it, therefore, that it is only on special occasions that summonses need be sent out.

12—Notice States Business

Wherever it is possible, the notice or summons convening the meeting should state the items of business which are to come before the meeting. The list of such items is called the "Agenda," meaning things to be done. To guard against accidentally omitting any item of business from the Agenda, it is advisable to say on the notice summoning the meeting "The Agenda will *include* the following items." Then follows the list of items. If this is not done, someone may challenge the right of the meeting when it is held to deal with an item which has not been specifically mentioned in the notice. As we deal with this matter more fully in paragraph 37 we shall not pursue it here. It is always desirable to put on the Agenda the item "Any other business," as an additional safeguard, so that if any item has been left out inadvertently it can be brought up under this heading. While it is not imperative that a notice convening a meeting should contain every item on the Agenda, it is highly desirable it should as far as possible, in order that the members may be able to judge for themselves of the necessity for their attendance.

13—*Specimen Notices*

The notice need only be of a very formal character, and for a trade union branch it may read :—

DEAR SIR AND BRO.,

You are hereby summoned to attend the quarterly meeting of your branch which will take place at the Greyfriars Hall, Wimbleschurch, on Friday next, September 29th, 1939, at 7-30 p.m.

The Agenda will include :—

- (1) Report of wages negotiations with the Employers' Federation.
- (2) Proposed alteration to rules.
- (3) Election of officers.
- (4) Any other business.

Your presence is urgently requested in order that a fully representative vote may be taken on the matters under discussion.

Yours fraternally,

T. SCRAWL, *Secretary*.

14—*Company Notice*

As regards companies, whether public or private, they are required by law to hold an annual general meeting, and the form of notice to be sent out is usually laid down by the company's articles. At least seven days' notice of the meeting must be given, specifying the place, the date and time of the meeting, and in the case where special business is to be taken, the general nature of such business. In certain cases shorter notice may be given. Company notices, while varying somewhat, would be roughly in this form :—

Notice is hereby given that the Sixth Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday, April 1, 1939, at 3 p.m., for the following purposes :—

- (1) To receive the Directors' Report and Statement of Accounts for the period ending December 25, 1938.
- (2) To elect Auditors.
- (3) To transact any other business of an Ordinary General Meeting.

By Order of the Board,

A. SHARP, *Secretary*.

15—Co-operative Meetings

The notices sent out by co-operative societies for annual general meetings are usually very detailed. Here are extracts from one :—

1. To verify the Minutes of the last General Meeting.
2. To elect Tellers.
3. To declare the result of the Election of the General Committee and Delegates to Congress.
4. Election of Secretary.
5. Election of Auditors.
6. To receive the Committee's Report.
7. To receive the Balance Sheet and resolve upon the Disposable Surplus.
8. To elect in districts a total of 100 members of the Society to serve on the Members' Council.
9. To elect 52 members of the Society as delegates to Divisional Meetings of the Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited, to be held in London on April 15, July 15, October 21, 1939, and January 20, 1940, or on such alternative dates as may be fixed by the C.W.S.
10. To receive the Education Committee's Report and Balance Sheet.
11. To receive the Statement of Accounts of the Political Purposes Committee.
12. To receive the Report of the Halls Fund Committee.
13. Election of Five Arbitrators (in accordance with Rule 65).
14. To consider and decide upon the selection of a member of the Society to be nominated in due course as a candidate for election upon the Southern Sectional Board of the Co-operative Union in succession to Mr. J. Jones, who retires at the end of the present Congress year, and to authorise the Committee to take all necessary steps to secure the election of the selected candidate.
5. To consider and resolve upon recommendations of the Committee to make grants as follows :—
 - (1) (a) £10 10s. to the Miller Hospital.
 - (b) £5 5s. to the London Hospital.
 - (c) £5 5s. to the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich.
 - (d) £5 5s. to the South London Hospital for Women, Clapham Common, etc.

By Order of the Committee,

February 18, 1939.

.....
Secretary.

The examples which have been given, while differing to some extent, make quite clear the principle that where annual, quarterly or other important meetings are concerned, proper notice to the individual members is essential. The types which have been illustrated can, of course, be adapted to suit the special requirements of particular societies. At least seven days' notice, however, should be given in all cases.

16—Summary of Chapter One

No legal rules of debate. Most societies draft own rules, called standing orders. These, when passed, become binding on members. Standing orders of most bodies very similar. Adapted from procedure in Parliament. All meetings need a Chairman. Where no regular Chairman, temporary Chairman must be elected. Convener conducts nominations and voting. Sometimes necessary to summon meeting. Limited liability companies and public bodies legal notice required. Special notice not generally necessary for regular branch meetings. Notice should state business to be transacted. Best to say "business will *include* the following." At least seven days' notice necessary.

CHAPTER TWO

Paragraphs 17—40

Quorum and Agenda

Is a bit more technical but won't cause any headaches ; tells about the quorum and why it is necessary, gives examples for Public Authorities, Co-operative Societies, Companies, Trade Unions and Voluntary Societies ; time limits required ; starting without a quorum ; opening the meeting ; the Agenda and how it is prepared.

17—*Quorum must be Present*

The first duty of the Chairman is to see that a quorum is present. No meeting should be allowed to commence until he is sure of this. The word "quorum" comes from the Latin and means "of whom." According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* it was originally used in England by the King's Commission which appointed the Magistrates or Justices of the Peace. First of all the name of every one of the Magistrates was given by the Commission. Then certain of them were specially named, some of *whom* were required to be present in order that the administration of justice could be carried on. In other words, unless the specially mentioned Magistrates were present, not a prisoner could be sentenced, nor a criminal be hanged (a most tiresome situation in the England of those days!). The Magistrates so named were called the "quorum," and gradually the term was extended until it now covers almost every body which meets to transact business. So "quorum" now means the number of members of any society or association which, according to its standing orders or rules, must be present in order that the business transacted at the meeting may be valid. The object of requiring a quorum is, of course, to ensure that sufficient people are present to make the meeting really representative of the association or body concerned. Unless such a stipulation was made all sorts of hole-and-corner meetings could take place.

18—*What is a Quorum ?*

No general rule can be laid down as to the number of members which should constitute a quorum. Every society is entitled to decide the matter for itself. Generally speaking, the larger the potential meeting the larger the quorum should be. The safest rule of

all would be to insist that a majority of the members should form a quorum, but this would be physically impossible to carry out. How, for example, could a public company or a trade union carry on its business if it had to insist that a majority of its members must be present at every general meeting? The shareholders or members would probably be scattered all over the country and they could not possibly attend. Similarly with the great co-operative societies. The London Co-operative Society has three-quarters of a million members. The Royal Arsenal Society and several others also have very large memberships. Under their rules, sectional general meetings of the society are held, usually during the week preceding the final general meeting of the whole society. By this means they do their best to consult their membership, but it would be totally impracticable to insist that at each of these sectional meetings a majority of the members of the society should be present. The important thing is to try to ensure that the meetings are as *representative* as possible. The argument does not apply with the same force in the case of committees and publicly-elected bodies. In many of them the numbers necessary to constitute the quorum are fixed by law.

19—Quorum for Public Authorities

In the case of local authorities, except those in the County of London, provisions as to the requisite quorum are laid down in the Local Government Act, 1933. County Councils cannot transact business unless at least one-fourth of the members of the Council are present. At Municipal Borough Council meetings the quorum is one-third of the whole number of the Council. Similarly at Urban and Rural District Council meetings one-third of the members must be present, unless the number present is seven or more

members, in which case they form the quorum. At Parish Council meetings one-third of the members must be present, but the quorum must never be less than three.

20—Quorum for Companies

The quorum required by public companies is also prescribed by law. In 1876 there was a rather curious case (*Sharp v. Dawes*) where only two persons attended a general quarterly meeting of a certain company. These two consisted of the Secretary and *one* shareholder. The shareholder took the chair and later passed a resolution making a call of 4s. 6d. per share from each shareholder. *The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.* An aggrieved shareholder contested the validity of the call, when it was decided on appeal that there could be no valid meeting unless at least two *members* were present. The Companies Act, 1929, increased this number to three.

21—Registrar Suggests Quorum

The activities of friendly societies, co-operative societies and trade unions, are regulated to a considerable extent by law. All are required to make rules for the carrying on of their work, and these rules have to be approved, in the case of all registered societies, by the Registrar of Friendly Societies. The friendly societies come under the Friendly Societies Act of 1896, and the co-operative societies under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893. The principal act which concerns the rules of trade unions is the Trade Union Act of 1871. None of these deal with the question of a quorum, but in actual practice the Registrar himself makes recommendations which are usually inserted in the rules.

22—*Co-operative Societies Stipulate Requirements*

The rules of the London Co-operative Society provide that seven shall form a quorum for the meetings of its committee of management. The Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society lays down that four out of the seven members of its committee of management shall be the quorum. Both require thirty members to be present to form a quorum at general meetings. Most trade union rules make provision for a quorum at delegate conferences, executive council or committee meetings. For example, the National Union of Railwaymen fixes the quorum for its Executive Committee at thirteen members, in addition to the Chairman, out of a total number of twenty-four. The National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers requires seven of the twelve elected members of its Executive to form a quorum. The Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers requires six of the twelve members of its Executive to form a quorum. Many unions also require a stated number of members to be present for branch, district and divisional committee meetings.

23—*Voluntary Societies Need Quorum*

There is still another type of society which is very numerous and yet which has no statutory existence. That is to say Parliament has conferred on them no legal powers, and laid down no specific provisions for their administration. These are called voluntary societies, and cover almost every conceivable type of association where people band themselves together to carry out some object in which they are all interested, such as running a football club, a dramatic society, a debating club, or associations for the promotion of hobbies, from pigeon-fancying to stamp-collecting.

Voluntary societies may likewise be formed for religious worship, for charitable purposes or for the furtherance of some social ideal such as the preservation of the countryside; in fact, for any lawful object which does not involve the making of a profit. Although there are no *statutory* rules governing voluntary bodies, they invariably form their own rules and administer these carefully. As an example of this type of society we may cite the Automobile Association, in which people have voluntarily come together for the protection of their interests as motorists. The rules of the A.A. fix the date of the annual meeting, and require fifteen members to be present to constitute a quorum.

24—Rules Should Stipulate Proportion

We have given examples of the quorum required for public authorities, public companies, co-operative societies, trade unions, and voluntary associations. These illustrate the manner in which provision is made for a quorum. We have seen that the actual number necessary will vary somewhat with the type of meeting. It may be taken as a general principle that for every meeting of an executive character, whether of a board, a council, conference or committee, the rules should make provision for a quorum. This can be done either by giving the actual number of members required, or by stating the *proportion* of members which must be in attendance. In our view the proportion should never be less than one-third. A majority would be better, as in that case there would be less likelihood of the final decisions of the meeting encountering objections on the ground that it had not been truly representative.

25—Quorum at Public Meetings

Public meetings called by political parties, ratepayers' associations, religious or social bodies, etc., are in a different category. However small the number of

those who actually attend they will form the quorum. This is equally the case with regard to aggregate or mass meetings of trade unions, co-operative societies or political parties. Undesirable as it may appear, in the absence of any definite provision to the contrary, it would be quite in order to proceed with business at such meetings even although only three or more persons were present.

26—*Quorum for Conferences*

In the case of conferences we consider that the quorum should never be less than one-third of the total members eligible to attend the conference. The International Labour Organisation (which is part of the League of Nations) goes further. The quorum required at its annual conferences at Geneva is a majority of the delegates. In all such cases, the Chairman and Secretary, if they are ordinary members who have been elected to office while still retaining their ordinary rights as members, would count towards the formation of a quorum.

27—*Time Limit for Quorum*

The important thing for the Chairman to keep in mind is that if there is no quorum present at any of these meetings where a quorum is required by law or by rule the meeting should be dissolved. If it proceeds, the business will not be in order and will not be binding upon the members. If the meeting is one of a corporation, a company or a public body, its decisions can be challenged in the courts of law. It is advisable that the standing orders should state the time limit within which the requisite quorum should be present. It is most unsatisfactory, when a meeting has been called that perhaps an hour is spent before the necessary members arrive to form the quorum.

28—*Ringing the Bell*

According to the Companies Act, 1929, if *within half-an-hour* from the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting must be dissolved. The rules of the London Co-operative Society, and those of the Royal Arsenal Society, insist that no sectional meetings shall proceed to business unless at least *thirty* members of the society are present *within half-an-hour* of the time of meeting, failing which such meeting must be dissolved. The London County Council provides that a bell shall be rung *five minutes* before the commencement of the meeting of the Council. This bell rings in the corridors and various meeting rooms at the County Hall, London, the headquarters of the London County Council. If, after the expiration of *15 minutes* from the appointed time for starting the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting is abandoned. Such provisions in the standing orders of most societies would often prevent wasted evenings and loss of temper, besides leading to the more punctual commencement of business.

29—*Proceeding in Absence of Quorum*

Can anything be done in the absence of a quorum? Commonsense would seem to indicate that where the routine business of a society would be held up because of this, and where there is no vital issue at stake, nothing would be lost by those present having an informal talk about matters. There may be some outstanding business which simply cannot be deferred. If there is no meeting, the officials must act on their own initiative. In such circumstances it would be an advantage to them to know the views of those present, however informally this was done. This does not relieve the officers of their responsibility in the least, and the Chairman would have to make it

as plain as daylight that because of the absence of a quorum no binding decisions could be taken by those present. Nor could any record appear in the minutes beyond the bare announcement that no quorum was present and the meeting had to be abandoned. If the officers have the least doubt as to the wisdom of such an informal chat, the Chairman should rule that as there is no quorum present no business can be transacted. The Secretary would record this in the Minute Book.

30—*Members Retiring Break up Quorum*

It should be remembered that a quorum is needed not merely at the beginning but throughout the meeting. If at any time several members leave and this reduces the numbers below the required quorum, the meeting should be adjourned. Otherwise any subsequent business which was transacted would be out of order. The practice in the House of Commons prescribes that not less than *forty Members* must always be present. In the House of Lords, although only *three* are needed to form a quorum, no vote, or *division* as it is called, can take place unless *thirty* Members are present. Many times it occurs, particularly in late sittings at the House of Commons, that the Speaker's attention is called to the absence of a quorum. Immediately, an electric bell rings, there is a scurry of attendants down the corridors to the Library and other rooms where Members congregate (not to mention the Smoke Room) and very soon, before the House can be "counted out," the Members put in an appearance in the Chamber, looking as virtuous as though they had never left it.

31—*Evading an Issue*

The standing orders of many municipalities also stipulate, that if at any time there is less than a certain number of members actually present while the debate

is in progress, the meeting must be adjourned. Standing Order 27 of the London County Council states: "If during any sitting of the Council the attention of the chairman be drawn to the number of members present, he shall, if he deems it necessary, cause a bell to be rung for not exceeding *two minutes*. If thereafter the chairman ascertains that there is not a quorum the sitting shall thereupon terminate." Labour members on some municipal bodies have occasionally found this power to dissolve the meeting used by their opponents to evade an inconvenient issue being discussed. On more than one occasion when a debate of importance to Labour has been in progress, the opposition members have walked out of the debating chamber and so dissolved the quorum. Once the quorum has disappeared, the meeting has then to be adjourned. At trade union meetings it is the duty of the Secretary to inform the Chairman should he discover that the necessary quorum is not present. The Chairman should thereupon adjourn the meeting.

32—Opening the Meeting

Having assured himself that the necessary quorum is present, the Chairman rises promptly at the hour for commencement and rings his bell. He looks round, sees that the door is closed, clears his throat and declares that the meeting is duly open. Sometimes he uses a mallet to call the meeting to order but this is only suitable for very small meetings, and a bell is by far the easier means of ensuring attention. Whether a mallet or a bell is to be used, it is the Secretary's job to make sure that one or other is at hand. A Chairman without a bell is like a policeman without a whistle. He is without his trusted standby. This is an elementary precaution which is sometimes overlooked.

33—*Bell and Water Bottle*

Secretaries rely too much on hall-keepers and good luck to provide the usual bottle of water and bell, without which no Chairman can be clothed with the necessary dignity of office. We have before now seen Chairmen rise to their feet, look helplessly around for some means of calling the meeting to order and finally have to resort to banging a walking stick or their fist on the table. The Secretary in our mind is, however, one of those who always attends a quarter-of-an-hour early to make sure that everything is at hand, and our Chairman has himself been impressed with the need for keeping a supervisory eye on such details. So all the preliminaries being in order, the Chairman then requests the Secretary to read aloud the notice convening the meeting. If it is an ordinary regular meeting and no notice has been issued, this of course, is omitted.

34—*Reading the Agenda*

After this, the Chairman should himself read the Agenda to the meeting. The Agenda, as has been stated, is a paper containing the list of items to be dealt with by the meeting. Sometimes it is very comprehensive, particularly when an important conference is taking place. The Agenda should always include any notices of motion which have been received from any of the members, and it is enough to say at this point that the object of reading the Agenda is to inform everybody as to what is to come before the meeting. If a summons has been sent out, this of course, may appear to be redundant, but the Chairman would do well to remember that not every member brings his notice with him. As a matter of routine, it is far better to read the Agenda on every occasion whether the meeting is a summoned one or not. By this means if a member observes that

some point in which he is interested is not on the Agenda, he can prepare to raise it under "Any other business" which always comes towards the end of the Agenda.

35—*Agenda Prepared by the Secretary*

As we have stated, the Agenda which is used at the conferences of large organisations, which may last several days, can be a very complicated affair. The Agenda required for an evening's meeting is much more modest in compass and may consist on some occasions of only a few items. The Agenda is usually prepared by the Secretary in the case of branch or committee meetings, and submitted to the Chairman for his approval. In the event of there being a difference of opinion between the Chairman and the Secretary as to whether any particular item should be submitted to the meeting, or on any other point concerning the Agenda, it is the Secretary's duty to refer the matter to the committee or the body under whose auspices the meeting is taking place. It is then their job to decide the point. Failing this the full meeting must deal with it.

36—*Varying the Agenda*

Where there are several items to be dealt with, they should be taken in the order in which they appear on the Agenda paper. It is possible, however, at the discretion of the Chairman to vary this order. But where he does so and where the Agenda has been read to the meeting, he should always explain what he is going to do, and give his reasons for making any variation, otherwise someone may suspect him of being up to some monkey-trick or other. It is also permissible for a member present at a meeting to ask that a particular item be taken out of its order,

either by being brought forward earlier, or later as may be desired. The Chairman is entitled to exercise his discretion in regard to such a request but the meeting can insist if the chairman objects. In such a case it will be necessary for a motion to be moved and seconded by members present, to ensure that the proposed change is accepted and put into operation by the Chairman. Such a course is, however, most unusual and generally the tact of the Chairman and the common sense of his audience arrange such matters amicably, without having to resort to the formal procedure of a motion.

37—Object of the Agenda

The object of having an Agenda is threefold: (a) To make sure that no item of vital importance is omitted (b) to see that the business is dealt with in proper order, (c) to give all members due warning as to what is coming before the meeting, thus preventing items being sprung upon them suddenly. Even in cases of regular meetings, where the business does not vary very much from meeting to meeting, it is advisable that a rough Agenda be prepared and read to the members at the commencement of the meeting. If any member has put forward an item or given notice of motion, and this item is not on the Agenda, he should inform the Chairman immediately after the latter has read the Agenda. If the item has been omitted by a mistake it should be included at once. This ensures that it will be dealt with. Otherwise it could be brought forward under the heading of "other business" only. In paragraph 12, in the notice convening the meeting, we have said the Agenda will "*include*" This is to allow for contingencies which may arise after the Agenda has been printed.

38—*Specimen Branch Agenda*

The following indicates the form of the Agenda of Trade Union Branch or Lodge meetings :—

1. Minutes of the previous meeting.
2. General Correspondence.
3. Branch Committee Reports.
4. Applications for membership.
5. District or Management Committee's Reports.
6. 'Trades Councils' or other reports.
7. To consider the following Notice of Motion by Bro. C. Shore : " That Branch Meetings be held weekly in future instead of fortnightly."
8. Any other business.
9. Date of next meeting.
10. Adjournment.

39—*Proceeding with the Agenda*

In dealing with the Agenda, the meeting has to adopt certain methods to put on record the actions it proposes to take. This necessitates the moving and seconding of motions and amendments, and, in fact, all the various points which come under the subject of "debate." Therefore we must try to get a clear conception of what these methods are.

40—*Summary of Chapter Two*

Chairman must see quorum is present. Object is to prevent unrepresentative meetings. Number needed varies, but for Executive Committees is usually a majority. For full meeting of members, actual numbers or proportion of total should be laid down by standing orders. Public Authorities, Companies, Co-operative Societies, Trade Unions usually fix numbers. Many voluntary societies like Automobile Association do likewise. Time limit should be fixed for quorum. If meeting proceeds in absence of quorum, decisions not binding. Quorum may be broken by members retiring during meeting. This dodge sometimes employed to evade decisions. Meeting opened by Chairman when sure quorum is present. Chairman reads Agenda prepared by Secretary with his approval. Agenda gives list of items, guards against omissions, and warns members of the business. Omissions from Agenda should be corrected at once, otherwise brought up under "Any other business." Chairman may vary order of business but should tell meeting. So may members, but only by consent.

CHAPTER THREE

Paragraphs 41—65

About Motions

Talks learnedly about motions, how they are constructed, why they cannot be in the negative, how to get round this obstacle ; tells when notice is required, how it is given, and winds up on an original motion.

41—Every Proposition is a Motion

A motion is described by the dictionaries as : “ Any proposition that is *moved* at a deliberative assembly.” Keep this in mind. *Any* proposition, idea, or suggestion which is properly put forward at a meeting for consideration and adoption in the manner described in Paragraphs 66 and 67 is a motion. No matter by what *formal* name it may be known, it is really in the strict sense a *motion*. There are, however, several different kinds of motions, and consequently we must give them different names to describe them and to prevent confusion. Thus we have an original motion, an amending motion (an amendment) and a motion to add words (commonly called an addendum or a rider). All these types are fully described later. But it is imperative to remember that all of them are *motions*.

42.—Motions Must be in the Affirmative

Every motion must begin with the word “ That,” and must be worded in the affirmative. That is to say, it must declare or proclaim something. Most motions go still further than this, and usually propose to take some definite action also. Such a motion first makes a declaration of principle, and then proposes certain methods to carry out that principle. A motion which merely expresses an opinion or a wish is known in the vernacular as a “ pious ” motion. The wording of a motion must be concise and clear, and must not traverse the ground covered by a previous motion which has been moved at the same meeting.

43—Construction of a Typical Motion

To illustrate the form a motion should take, we give a typical motion of the Trades Union Congress :—

“ That this Congress is of opinion that Clause 6 of Section 31 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1935, should be amended to provide for the payment of benefit in respect of each day of

proved unemployment, and requests the General Council to take the necessary action to achieve this object, and further to continue its previous partially successful representations to the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee for the abolition of the waiting period. Congress also calls upon the Minister of Labour to take immediate steps to increase the Unemployment Benefit paid to females, thus eliminating the anomaly that exists between males and females in receipt of Unemployment Benefit, and instructs the General Council to raise this important matter without delay."

It will be observed that this motion (1) calls for an amendment of the Unemployment Insurance Act; (2) requests the General Council to take action; (3) calls upon the Minister to increase benefits; and (4) instructs the General Council to raise the matter. It thus complies with the rule that a motion must affirm something, and it indicates the type of action to carry out the requirements which it has laid down.

44—Negative Motions

Motions which are purely negative in character should not be accepted. It is not sufficient for a motion to declare it will *not* do something. It must at least express an opinion. This is not so simple as it looks, because it is possible to word a motion in such a manner that although *apparently* in the affirmative, it actually produces a negative result. Let us suppose that a letter asking a branch to send representatives to a conference of the Federation of Fanatical Fascists, or some such political monstrosity, is before the meeting. A motion might be moved: "That no action be taken." This, indeed, is quite a usual form of motion. Strictly speaking, however, it is out of order because it is definitely a *negative* motion. A far better motion would be: "That this meeting is of the opinion that no useful purpose would be served by sending representatives to this organisation, and declines to do so."

45—Securing Negative Result

This places on record the opinion of the meeting and thus affirms a definite principle, namely, that no good purpose would be served by attending. At first sight it may appear to be quite as *negative* as "no action." But actually it is much more definite as it clearly records the determination of the meeting not to accept the invitation. The motion that "no action be taken" leaves the matter open, although no doubt those who moved it were firmly under the impression that it would emphatically reject the invitation. The motion does nothing of the kind, because it is clear that "no action" means what it says. It neither rejects nor accepts the invitation, but merely leaves the question in a state of indecision. It thus leaves the door open for a motion accepting the invitation to be moved at a subsequent meeting. This actually could be done without rescinding the motion that "no action be taken." Make sure therefore that the motion really does dispose of the matter.

46—Another Negative Motion

Sometimes a motion "That the letter lie on the table" is moved, to prevent further action. This is not really effective because, if it is strictly interpreted, it means that the letter must be brought up at *every* subsequent meeting. It simply defers taking action. If the words "until called for" are added to this motion, it even then does not dispose of the question entirely, but merely *suspends* judgment to a future date. Any member could at a future meeting move that the letter be then considered. There would be no need to rescind the previous resolution. It is far better, unless it is *genuinely* desired to postpone consideration, to move something definite. A motion: "That the letter be noted," although primarily intended to

record that the matter has been considered, is also often used as an equivalent to the motion: "That no action be taken." Sometimes it is moved: "That the letter lie under the table." That is an affirmative motion, and is a polite way of saying "That we put the letter in the waste-paper basket."

47—*Omnibus Motions*

Sometimes a motion consists of several clauses, each clause dealing with a separate phase of the subject. These motions are called omnibus or composite motions because of their size. An omnibus takes all sorts of passengers on board without distinction. An omnibus motion may also include almost anything. A motion passed at a Special Conference of Trade Union Executives in May, 1939, which dealt with compulsory military training, national service, and related subjects, consisted of ten paragraphs. It was not too long, either, for the occasion and subject. It is extremely unlikely that such a comprehensive motion would be met with at a branch or lodge meeting. The usual method would be to treat each point as a separate motion, and to debate this and get it out of the way before proceeding to the next. At big conferences, where there might be many speakers on the subject, such a course would be found to be impracticable. Hence the "composite." Needless to say amendments may be moved to any of the clauses of a composite motion.

48—*Arranging a Composite Motion*

It is a common practice at congresses, and delegate conferences, where several motions on the Agenda deal with the same subject, and appear to overlap one another, to call the movers of such motions together for consultation. This is done by a body usually called the Standing Orders Committee, whose

duty is to prevent overlapping, and thus facilitate the business being speedily transacted. When this is done, it is usually found possible for the parties to agree to one comprehensive motion, which, while perhaps not being *identical* with any of the several motions originally put forward, nevertheless contains sufficient of the *policy* of each to meet with general agreement. The conference thus has before it one motion only, instead of several. This serves to concentrate the debate on a single motion, and avoids overlapping and repetition, which would otherwise be almost unavoidable. Movers of the separate motions usually arrange amongst themselves who will move the composite motion, and who will second and support it, matters being adjusted in such a way as to ensure that all those concerned in the consultation have an opportunity of speaking. If agreement cannot be reached among the movers, any of them may insist that their own motion shall be put to the conference separately in its original form.

49—Motions Should be in Writing

The person who puts forward a motion is called the mover of the motion. Sometimes he is called the proposer, but "mover" is the correct term. It is desirable that the mover should put down the exact wording of his motion in *writing* before handing it up to the Chairman. There are two principal advantages in this. First, the mover when writing out his motion, has more time to think out the exact wording he desires to use than when he merely gets up and gives it verbally. Certainly motions should be written out where an important decision has to be taken. In such a case every single word in a motion may be of the utmost importance. Again, a motion may *sound* well enough when it is being given verbally, but when

looked over carefully, errors will often be detected that would never have occurred if the mover had taken the precaution to write the motion out.

50—Dangers of Faulty Wording

Many a debater has had the mortification of sitting and listening to his motion being massacred by opponents, because of its faulty construction, caused by insufficient thought when putting it forward. The second advantage of a written motion is, that in an ordinary meeting the Secretary cannot take down the *exact* words the mover wants to appear in the motion. Usually he can get the *substance* only, and, as we have said, there are occasions when every *word* counts. This method of writing out motions, unfortunately, is not usually observed at branch or lodge meetings. Many of the motions come up there on the spur of the moment, and there is little opportunity for the mover to write them out. It is also seldom necessary or practicable to write out a motion during a discussion in committee. Whenever it is possible, it should be done. Written motions should always be insisted upon if the subject matter is of vital importance.

51—Make Sure of the Exact Wording

Where a motion is not put in writing, but has been taken down in substance by the Secretary, the Chairman should straightway ask the Secretary to read the motion. He should then ask the mover whether the *wording* of the motion as read by the Secretary is *exactly* what the mover intended. This is a very necessary precaution, and should *never* be omitted. It too frequently happens that after the debate has finished, and just as the motion is being read over to the meeting prior to the vote being taken, the mover or seconder complains that the motion is *worded differently* from the one he has moved or seconded. He then wants to alter the wording. To allow this

would be to invite objection from those who have opposed the motion, and it is most undesirable that such a situation should arise. Consequently it is best to make sure of the actual wording before any discussion is allowed on the motion.

52—*Wording Cannot be Altered Without Consent*

When once a motion has been accepted by the Chairman, it becomes the property of the meeting. It cannot be withdrawn if even one member dissents, nor can it be altered or amended in any way without the consent of the majority present at the meeting. During the discussion on a motion, those responsible for bringing the motion forward may realise that it will certainly be defeated on the vote. They may, therefore, desire to alter its wording in such a manner as practically to alter the whole of the policy of the motion to save it from defeat.

53—*If Any Dissent Vote Must be Taken*

It may appear on some occasions that most of the members present will be willing to allow an alteration in the wording, even though the substance will be changed thereby. In such a case the Chairman, after reading out the proposed alteration, should ask whether *any* member objects to the revised wording. Even if *one* member does so object, the motion must stand. The proper method by which it should be altered in that case, is by means of an amendment moved in the way described in Chapter Five. This does not apply to a trivial alteration, but only to an alteration which affects the *policy* of the motion. Where matters of substance are concerned the moving of an amendment is usually the only satisfactory course. This restriction is necessary because of the fact that members who have already spoken on the motion cannot again speak on the altered motion.

54—*Why Vote is Necessary*

They may have supported the original motion, but may dislike the motion in its altered form. They should have the right to say so. If a definite amendment is moved to alter the wording, they are at liberty to speak on such an amendment. Sometimes where dissent is shown to an alteration, the Chairman does not wait for a "formal motion." He adopts the rough and ready method of saying: "All those in favour of the alteration," then "All those against," and straightway takes the feeling of the meeting. If the matter is one of substance this practice is to be deprecated. Strictly speaking he *must* allow discussion if it is demanded, but often the alteration is of such a minor character as to make further discussion a waste of time.

55—*Agreeing on the Substance*

In committee or meetings of a more or less informal character, it is often found that whilst there may be some differences as to the actual wording to be used, the substance of the matter is generally agreed. In such cases the exact wording to be inserted in the minutes is often left to the Secretary, who, if he knows his job, can generally express what is wanted a good deal more accurately than can the mover himself on the spur of the moment.

56—*Notice of Motion*

It is not necessary for notice to be given of the intention to move a motion which *arises* out of an item on the Agenda. All that is necessary is for the members to hand up their motions to the Chairman. But when it is a question of altering one of the standing orders, rescinding a resolution, or some matter of vital policy, *all* the members should be given the opportunity of considering it. This is

especially important where financial matters are concerned affecting the funds of the society. Many bodies make it a condition, that no money other than quite trivial sums can be granted to outside bodies from the funds, unless notice has been given. Furthermore, it is as well that the notice should state the sum which it is proposed should be granted. The Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society has a standing order to this effect. In all such cases the Chairman should insist that the member raising the subject gives notice of any motion he intends to move, and where grants of money are concerned he should state the amount proposed.

57—Notice Must be in Writing

Occasionally verbal notice is permitted, but usually written notice should be insisted upon. Wherever verbal notice is allowed it should be in general terms, and may be regarded as a preliminary intimation, to be backed up before the end of the meeting by written notice. The member should write out his notice in something like the following manner: "I desire to give notice that I shall move the following motion at the next meeting." (Here follow the terms of the motion.) The item will then be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting and, if it is really an important matter, a copy of the motion should be sent to every member. The necessity for notice, however, does not mean that a member cannot bring forward an item for discussion at ordinary periodical branch meetings under the heading of "any other business." Nevertheless, "any other business" must not be used to bring forward far-reaching motions which vitally affect the members. It is meant to give opportunity for discussing ordinary routine business. Vitally important motions must never be discussed unless due notice has been given.

58—Notice Necessary at Special Meetings

At special meetings it is a rule that no items may be discussed other than those appearing on the Agenda, of which notice has been duly given. The committees responsible for organising all important meetings generally insist rigidly upon notice being given before a motion is allowed to be brought forward. This applies to all motions dealing with questions of policy, but not with purely formal motions on procedure such as "Votes of Thanks," etc. The Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society requires that any motion intended for consideration at an *ordinary* General Meeting must be received in writing four weeks before the meeting. The Agenda Paper of the London County Council is delivered to members at least two days before the meeting, and notice of motion must be received in writing one day before the Agenda Paper is issued. The regulations of public bodies are naturally somewhat more strict in these matters than may be necessary for organisations which have not quite the same legal responsibility. The purpose of citing them here is to indicate the general insistence that notice of motion should be properly given.

59—Amending a Notice of Motion

Sometimes it occurs that after a member has given notice of motion he desires to alter it. He may do this, but must give reasonable notice to the Secretary in writing of his desire to alter his original "Notice of Motion." It is no use his waiting until a few minutes before the meeting commences and then informing the Secretary, because in that case the latter would be quite in order if he refused to accept the alteration. In the latter event, the member still has the option of appealing to the members to allow him to alter his notice of motion, and if they, by a majority vote, give him the permission, then the

alteration may be made. What has been said above applies equally to branches or societies as to individual members. Thus, where a preliminary Agenda has been prepared from motions submitted by societies for consideration at a forthcoming conference, some society may desire to alter its own motion. It may be allowed to do this provided that notice of alteration is given sufficiently early to enable it to be circulated on the final Agenda.

60—No Radical Alteration Allowed

Under no circumstances can permission be given to alter a notice of motion, if the suggested alteration is such as to alter materially the *policy* of the motion. Even though the meeting may be willing to give consent, the Chairman should not allow it. Fresh notice must be given in the ordinary way, so that every member, whether present or not, may be acquainted with the alteration which it is desired to effect. Unless this were done, it would destroy the whole purpose of giving notice of motion.

61—Notice of Amendment

When the meeting has actually commenced the discussion on the motion, anyone other than the mover and seconder is, of course, at liberty to move an amendment in the ordinary way. Some societies insist that notice of *amendment* must be given in addition to notice of *motion*, so that both motion and amendment can be circulated to the members before the meeting. This practice, while undoubtedly the fairest, is rather cumbersome, and unless it is definitely provided for in the rules or standing orders is seldom followed. The mover of a motion of which notice has been given may, with the consent of the Chairman, postpone the moving of his motion to a later date than that originally intended.

62—*First Motion Called Original Motion*

The first motion which is brought forward *on any particular subject*, is called the original motion. This distinguishes it from any amending motions which may be moved later on that same subject. The Chairman should always refer to it by this name, not only for the sake of clearness, but to make his members familiar with the term. It must not be imagined that the motion which deals with the first item on the Agenda is the one and *only* original motion of the meeting. Nothing of the kind. The Agenda may be composed of a dozen subjects all separate and distinct from one another. It is as though the meeting were divided into compartments, one compartment for each item. Every *item* has its own separate debate, and consequently its own *original motion*.

63—*Motions Must be Moved and Seconded*

All motions must be moved and seconded. The only exception is that no seconder is required in committee. The person proposing the motion is called the mover, and the person seconding it is called the seconder of the motion. Both mover and seconder must be present to put forward their motion.

64—*Secunder Not required in Committee*

Rules of the House of Commons state that a motion does not require a seconder when the House is acting as a Committee. This practice holds good elsewhere in the case of committee meetings, unless the standing orders say the contrary. Most public bodies, however, insist upon having seconders on all occasions, and this is by far the best plan. The rare exception should be made in the case of small committees only.

65—*Summary of Chapter Three*

Every proposition is a motion, whether called amendment, addendum or rider. All begin with "That." Should be quoted in affirmative and propose definite action. If express an opinion only, are usually called pious motions. Negative motions should not be accepted. Possible to word motion in affirmative yet prevent action. Motions with several clauses called "composite" or "omnibus." Where several motions deal with same subject movers should consult to arrange single composite. Motions should be in writing and carefully worded. If verbal only, Chairman reads over motion as taken down by Secretary. Then ascertains whether wording suits mover. Once moved and seconded motion becomes property of meeting. Cannot be altered except by unanimous consent. Otherwise amending motion must be moved to make alteration. Notice of motion essential where any drastic proposal moved. Notice must be in writing and all members notified. Then matter is determined at specially summoned meeting. Slight alterations in notice may be allowed. If radical alteration suggested, new notice must be given. First motion on any subject called original motion. Every subject has its own original motion. All motions must be moved and seconded by members present. Only exception is in Committee.

CHAPTER FOUR

Paragraphs 66—98

Debating a Motion

Is the longest yet, but if you get fed up, the summary at the end will tell you all that matters. Shows how to move, second and debate a motion, how the Chairman applies the gag, when the mover replies, and why you can't rescind a resolution very easily.

66—How to Move a Motion

To illustrate the moving and seconding of a motion, we will suppose that a branch has received a letter from the Selwell Co-operative Society, drawing attention to an Exhibition of co-operative goods which it is to hold during the following month. The letter requests the branch to make known the Exhibition as widely as possible amongst the members. A member who approves of this course may rise and say :—

“ Mr. Chairman, I move this branch gives its fullest support to the Co-operative Exhibition and undertakes to circulate appropriate advertising literature to the members.”

The mover should then explain in a short speech his reasons for moving the motion. When he has finished, the Chairman will ask the Secretary to read the motion to the meeting. If the motion has not been handed up in writing, he should ask the mover whether the wording of the motion as read by the Secretary is just what the mover desires it to be.

67—When Discussion is Allowed

The mover having agreed that the wording is correct, the Chairman asks: “ Does anyone second this motion ? ” Some other member, who favours the project, stands up and says : “ I second the motion.” The seconder may then speak in support, or may reserve his remarks for a later period. Usually he prefers to speak at once. The Chairman then announces : “ The motion is now open for discussion.” It is frequently desirable at branch meetings or at committees or small business meetings, to allow a little discussion to take place before a motion is definitely called for. This may be wrong technically, but it is right from a commonsense point of view. Such a

procedure is, however, quite unsuitable for large meetings and conferences, and should never be permitted. If such latitude is allowed in the circumstances we have described and the Chairman finds that the discussion is likely to become inconclusive, he should insist that a motion be moved.

68—Necessity for a Secunder

It should be noted that, with the exception of deliberation at committee meetings, no discussion, except the explanatory speech of the mover, can be permitted on a motion until it has been seconded. Indeed, some organisations go further, and will not allow the mover to explain his motion until it has received a seconder. This, however, is too extreme. If no seconder is forthcoming, the motion falls, and the field is open for any other motion dealing with the subject. A proposition which has failed to get a seconder may, if desired, be proposed again at a later stage in the debate, when perhaps a seconder will be forthcoming. If another motion is then before the meeting, the revived proposition would have to be taken as an amendment. Once a motion is seconded any member is at liberty to express his views on it.

69—Debate on a Motion

The mover and seconder having given their views in favour of the motion, the best course for the Chairman to follow is to allow a member who desires to speak *against* the motion to speak next. It is always well to have opposing points of view expressed alternately. Thus, the next person to speak after the motion under consideration has been duly seconded, should be an opponent of the motion. Then, when he has finished, a speaker *in favour* of the motion should continue the discussion or *debate*, as it is called. Anyone who

takes part in a discussion or controversy is called a "disputant." It is not always practicable to regulate the debate in such a manner that the disputants for and against the motion *can* speak in rotation, but the debates are far more interesting when this course is possible.

70—*Addressing the Chairman*

When a member desires to speak he should rise in his place and call out "Mr. Chairman." This is the usual form of address. It has, however, become a bit complicated in recent years because so many women are nowadays appointed to preside over meetings. How should they be addressed? Should it be "Mr. Chairman," "Madam Chairman," "Madam Chairwoman," or what? We have heard these titles used indiscriminately many a time. There is no rule on the subject, but in English legislation, reference to the male is supposed to include the female. Far be it from us to suggest that the principle of the greater including the lesser should be applied here! But why not say: "Mr. Chairman" and be done with it? From what we have seen of women in public positions they are thoroughly well able to look after themselves. They won't feel slighted in the least by being called "Mr. Chairman." But as we have said there is no rule, and speakers can use what phrase they wish. If "Madam" is preferred, then let it be "Madam Chairwoman" and not a hybrid like "Madam Chairman." Let us suppose that some ardent member has yelled out sufficiently loudly to attract the Chairman's attention, who thereupon looks in the direction of the speaker. This is called "catching the Chairman's eye." Sometimes several speakers rise at the same moment, and it is a rule that the one whom the Chairman *sees* first has the right to address the meeting.

71—*Catching the Chairman's Eye*

This is the invariable practice in Great Britain, both in the House of Commons and elsewhere. We cannot say it is entirely satisfactory. Many times we have heard complaints that someone or other has not caught the Chairman's eye, although he has jumped up half a dozen times to try to "get the floor." It can be seen from this that it is not enough to be *able* to speak. It is not enough to *want* to speak. The important thing is to get the *opportunity* to speak. The knowing ones, both in the House and outside, have learned how to induce the Chairman to look in their direction. They go behind his chair and whisper blandishments in his ear. Or perhaps they send a polite note up to him, asking permission to speak. Sometimes they are unlucky, even then, but often enough they are successful. Meanwhile, the voices of the innocents are to be heard vainly howling in the wilderness "Mr. Chairman." Is it possible to regularise this procedure? Certainly the Chairman must use his discretion in this as in other matters. He is entitled to see that the pros and cons of the questions under discussion are properly put. It is no use his calling upon all those who are in favour of one point of view and ignoring all those who take another. He would soon have the house about his ears if he did so, and few Chairmen would be so biased as to act in such a fashion.

72—*Getting the Floor*

What, then, is the alternative? The practice that is adopted in the Labour Movement on the Continent of Europe seems to be a good one. At the beginning of a debate the Chairman asks that all those who desire to speak should send their names up to him in writing. He then puts the names down on his list of speakers in the order that they have been handed in.

Periodically in the course of a debate he announces the names of the speakers who are still to address the audience, and the order in which they are to be heard.

73—*Too Many Speakers*

Sometimes he has too many speakers on his list and in that case it will be open to either the Chairman or the delegates to close the debate in accordance with the methods described in Chapter Seven. Again, the Chairman may announce at a certain stage in the debate that he will accept the names of no more speakers, and as he has already asked at the beginning that intending speakers should send up their names, no one can complain of hardship or unfairness in this. But until such a method becomes general in this country, any would-be speaker would be well-advised to spring up in his place like a jack-in-the-box and bawl "Mr. Chairman" as soon as a previous speaker has concluded his remarks. "Catching the Chairman's eye" is still the only recognised method of establishing the right to the floor.

74—*Number of Speeches*

The almost invariable practice is that speakers are allowed to address the meeting once only on any motion. The exception to the general practice is the mover of an original motion, who is given the right to reply. In committee, too, speakers are not so restricted and can speak as many times as they can get the floor. Some bodies, however, lay it down in their standing orders that members may speak twice in open meeting. Generally speaking, this is not desirable, as it leads to repetition. Another point is that the standing orders should always impose a definite limit on the length of the speeches. Otherwise some members would inflict themselves on the meeting all night.

75—*Length of Speeches*

What should be the length of speeches? Remembering that the object of most meetings is to do business, the shorter a speech the better, provided that no one is prevented from properly expressing himself. In a branch meeting it is surely not unreasonable that speakers should not exceed five or ten minutes. At public meetings, where the object is to appeal to the sense or the sentiments of an audience, and where the speakers have been specially appointed to address a meeting, greater freedom must naturally be provided. If there is a single speaker he may take anything up to an hour, provided always that he is not boring his audience. If there is more than one speaker half-an-hour should be ample.

76—*Time Limit Imperative*

Only recently Members of the House of Commons complained that there were too many long-winded speeches. Front Benchers were the worst offenders according to the complainants. They monopolised the time so that the Back Benchers never got a chance. The Speaker sympathised with them but felt himself powerless to impose restrictions without the authority of the Standing Orders of the House. Everyone must recognise the difficulty of adequately stating a case on an intricate subject in less than half-an-hour. It is practically impossible to do so on occasions. But the exception proves the rule, we suppose, and as brevity is the soul of wit, so conciseness of speech is to be preferred to length and discursiveness. This is undoubtedly true of business meetings, but less true of meetings called for propaganda purposes. All public bodies impose time limits. The London County Council allows its members fifteen minutes in full Council.

77—*Five Minute Speeches*

The Co-operative Congress limits most speakers on reports to five minutes. Even movers of motions are allowed only ten minutes. The Trades Union Congress observes very similar limits. Even in the International Labour Movement, where lengthy speeches are not considered so irritating as in this country, speeches are usually curtailed to fifteen minutes except in special circumstances. The same limitation applies in the Conferences of the International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations. Certainly five or ten minutes should be an ample allowance for the ordinary meetings held by trade union branches and similar bodies in Great Britain.

78—*Granting an Extension*

One minute before the expiration of the speaker's allowance, the Chairman should tinkle his bell as a warning. Then, when the speaker has reached the limit of his time he should sit down. But supposing that he is holding his audience and has not been able to complete his point, is he to be allowed to continue? Here is a dilemma for the Chairman. If he allows one speaker to exceed his time, on what principle is he to prevent another from exceeding the limit? Surely the deciding factor should be the wishes of the audience. Often delegates will call out "Go on" when a speaker has completed his time, and the Chairman, if he finds the demand is general, should allow the speaker to continue. If he has any doubts he should at once submit the point to the vote of the delegates.

79—*Extension by Consent*

Usually, however, this procedure is totally unnecessary, and it would only be advisable for a Chairman to do

this if he considered that his impartiality might be challenged. Very few codes of standing orders provide for an extension of a speaker's time. At the Annual Conference of the Union of Post Office Workers, if a speaker has exhausted his time but has not completed his matter it is a common practice for delegates to call out "Extension." The Chairman immediately submits this to the vote without any discussion, and if the majority vote in favour the delegate continues for a further few minutes. The Co-operative Congress also allows an extension by consent of the delegates. This practice is one that might conceivably be abused, and speakers who desire to keep the goodwill of their audience will be well advised to time their speeches so as not to make too big a call on the indulgence of their listeners.

80—*Are You Ready to Vote ?*

When the debate has proceeded for a reasonable time, and the speakers for and against have ventilated their views, it should be brought to a close. There are certain definite rules whereby this may be done, and these are described in Chapter Seven. It is not usually necessary to have to resort to them, however, the length of the debate resting very largely with the Chairman. If the discussion seems to be one-sided, he should ask whether or not any member desires to express an opposite point of view. If no member wants to do so, the Chairman, after allowing the mover of the original motion to reply, should close the debate forthwith. As an alternative method, he may turn to the members and ask: "Are you ready to vote?" The members, if they feel that the discussion has gone on long enough, will respond with the cry of "Vote, Vote," and if this appears general the Chairman may take the vote. Often they take the initiative and call out "Vote," without waiting

for the Chairman's invitation. The mover of the original motion should, however, be given the opportunity to reply.

81—Chairman and the Closure

Another method is for the Chairman to announce : "I consider the question has been discussed pretty fully, but in order that no member may think that I am 'gagging him' I shall allow two more members to speak, one for and one against the motion, if they desire." Of course, the number may be more or less than we have suggested as the Chairman thinks fit, as long as he gives both sides an equal opportunity. This method is quite fair, and we have seldom seen exception taken to it. If no member rises, the debate should be closed at once. If several members rise together, the Chairman will decide which of them has "got the floor," and call upon him to speak. When this member has finished, the first opposition member to rise should speak, and so on, the speakers for and against being heard in rotation.

82—Mover of Original Motion Replies

The standing orders usually allow the mover of an original motion to reply to the debate on his motion. The mover will probably avail himself of the opportunity. There have been occasions when movers have not thought it necessary to reply. Much depends upon the character of the debate and whether the opposition has been formidable or not. We may assume that most movers of an original motion will reply.

83—When to Reply

Sometimes when more than one amendment has been tabled to an original motion, the mover is perplexed as to when he should reply to the debate. The correct

time to reply is at the end of the debate on the first amendment. Some people think that when the reply of the mover of the original motion has been made, no further amendment can be moved. That is not so, as we shall see later in Chapter Five. If amendments have been put down in writing, or if notice of further amendment has been given when the first amendment was before the meeting, the fact that the mover of the original motion replies does not end the debate on the subject altogether. It merely closes the discussion on the first amendment. Once that has been disposed of the later amendments are taken in their proper turn. The mover of the original motion, has the right, like any other member, to take part in the discussion on these. These references to amendments may puzzle you at this moment, but when you have read Chapter Five you will understand them all right.

84—No New Matter

In replying, no *new matter* may be introduced. This is a very tricky business. It is not always easy to know what is new matter and what is not, and the Chairman may have difficulty in deciding. Generally speaking, if the mover in replying confines himself to facing the arguments raised, and does not himself introduce new points into the discussion, he may be regarded as conforming to the spirit of this rule. If, however, he does introduce new matter (to which no one else would have any opportunity of replying) it would be grossly unfair and the Chairman should stop him from doing this. He would be well advised not to interfere unless it has become quite apparent that the mover is going outside the scope of the reply and is really opening up a new debate. The mover of the original motion is the last to speak, and when his reply is completed no further discussion may be allowed. The votes are then taken for and against

the motion, the members voting by show of hands. This is the ordinary practice on all but exceptional occasions, and is called "putting the question." Other methods of voting are fully explained in Chapter Eight.

85—*Position of Defeated Motion*

If a majority of the members vote against the motion, it is lost, and the field is open for a fresh motion. The same motion, however, cannot be brought forward again at the same meeting even if it is disguised in some other form. Though the wording may be different, so long as the *policy* of the motion is substantially the same as that which has been defeated it cannot be allowed to stand. The standing orders of some bodies specify a period of time which must elapse before a defeated motion may be brought before the society again. House of Commons procedure will not allow such a motion to be raised during the same session. In some instances this is a matter of months, and although such a lengthy period is quite impracticable in most cases, it is certainly desirable that some period of time should be specified.

86—*Withdrawal of Motions*

It sometimes occurs, after a motion or an amendment has been moved, seconded, and debated, that the mover feels that he can no longer support it, or that he prefers to withdraw it in favour of some other course which has been moved. He therefore asks the Chairman's permission to withdraw his motion. The Chairman, as a rule, simply asks the seconder of the motion whether he is willing to allow this to be done, and if so, allows the motion to fall. This is not correct. Once the motion has been proposed and seconded, it becomes the *property of the meeting*, and

cannot be withdrawn without the consent of the meeting. Should the "previous question" (described in Chapter Seven) have been moved, the motion cannot be withdrawn.

87—Only if No Dissent

We have seen many errors made in allowing withdrawal without unanimous consent. Sir Erskine May, after pointing out that there must be *no* dissent to the withdrawal, says: "A motion which has been withdrawn . . . can be moved again, and for this reason leave to withdraw is frequently refused." Sir R. Palgrave says: "Motions and amendments may be withdrawn, leave being granted without *any* negative voice." Clearly this means that if even *one* member dissents, the proposition must remain. The Chairman asks: "Is it your wish that this motion be withdrawn?" If no dissent is expressed, permission is then given. In cases where an amendment has been moved to an original motion, the Chairman must first ask the mover and seconder of the amendment whether they consent to the withdrawal of the original motion. If they agree, he must ask the meeting whether or not anyone objects to the withdrawal. If *any* member present objects to this course being adopted, the original motion and amendment must stand. It should be remembered, however, that the mover and seconder of any motion have the right to vote against their own motion if they so desire. No motion or amendment can be withdrawn when the vote is about to be taken.

88—Motion or Resolution

If the majority of the votes are in favour of the motion, the Chairman declares: "The motion is carried." It then changes its name and is thereafter called a

resolution. There is a bad practice among many people of referring indiscriminately to an original motion as the "resolution." The accuracy of this depends on the point of view from which the proposition is regarded. For example, a branch meets and considers a proposition submitted by a member. The proposition at *that* stage is a *motion*. If, however, the branch *adopts* the motion, it becomes a *resolution of that branch*.

89—Definition of Resolution

Let us take it a stage further. The branch forwards the resolution to the executive or controlling authority of the society. When it comes before the executive it ceases to be the property of the branch and must be moved and seconded as a *motion* before it can be discussed by the executive. It remains a motion until the vote is taken on it, when it is either defeated or passed. In the latter case it becomes a *resolution of the executive*. The point to notice here is that any *resolution* of a constituent body becomes a *motion* of the controlling body when it is submitted to a meeting of the latter for consideration.

90—Motion and Resolution Not Synonymous

In the strict sense, therefore, it is incorrect to refer to any proposition as a resolution whilst it is under *consideration*. Many writers use the terms interchangeably, but obviously this is inaccurate. A motion is merely something which is *proposed* for consideration. A resolution is a motion which, after being considered, is definitely *passed* by the meeting. That is to say, something upon which the meeting has resolved. Every proposition submitted to a particular meeting is a motion at that meeting

until the stage is reached when it has been finally passed by the meeting. It is not until this has been done that it becomes a *resolution* of such meeting.

91—Resolution Cannot be Negatived by a Subsequent Motion

Once the motion has been passed, by a majority of those present voting for it, and has thus become a resolution of the meeting, no motion can subsequently be proposed at that meeting, which rescinds, negatives or destroys it. For instance, if the branch has decided to support the request of the Selwell Co-operative Society, it will not be in order for a further motion to be moved, "That the resolution lie on the table until called for." The Co-operative Exhibition is to take place during the following month and if action is not taken on it forthwith, the purpose of the motion supporting the Exhibition will be frustrated. This is precisely the intention of the motion "That the resolution lie on the table until called for." Therefore, while not actually rescinding the motion it would have the effect of rendering it useless. Consequently, no Chairman should ever allow such a course to be followed.

92—Resolution Rescinded at Special Meeting Only

A resolution can be rescinded at a special meeting only, and even then not until notice of motion to rescind it has been given in writing to the Chairman. This must be done in time for the rescinding motion to appear in the summons convening the special meeting. The member desiring to rescind a resolution must give notice of motion to do so to the Chairman. The practice of some Chairmen of allowing resolutions to be rescinded without such notice is to be strongly deprecated. We have known cases where, immediately the minutes have been passed, a

motion has been moved in entire opposition to a resolution appearing therein. This sort of thing leads to chaos. Public bodies are resolute in their opposition to this danger. The London County Council requires twelve months to elapse before a notice of motion to rescind a resolution can be entertained. Such notice must be backed by the signatures of twenty members. Many other municipal bodies have similar safeguards. The Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society will not allow notice to rescind to be given until six months have elapsed.

93—Notice to Rescind Essential

These rules give an indication of the general practice of taking every precaution to ensure that a resolution shall not be rescinded, except under very pressing circumstances. When notice of motion to rescind a resolution has been given, it must be sent out on the summons issued by the Secretary, so that all members may have due notice of it before the special meeting takes place. The object of this rule is, of course, to prevent members revoking resolutions whenever they choose. It is no good passing resolutions one week and then rescinding them the next. That simply makes the society look foolish, and brings business to a standstill. But there are cases where, owing to a *change of circumstances* it is either impracticable or inadvisable to carry out a resolution passed at a previous meeting.

94—Rescinding in Emergency

For instance, a resolution may have been passed by a trade union branch at the previous meeting :—

“That the General Secretary be severely censured for not being present at the branch to give a report of his meeting with the employers, and a letter be sent to the Executive to demand an explanation.”

(*Carried with acclamation.*)

By the next morning's post comes a letter from the General Secretary, explaining that the employers had at the last moment postponed the meeting until the following week, and asking the branch to call a meeting later to hear the report. To allow the resolution to stand would be foolish, and the mover and seconder would probably be among the first to desire its being rescinded, particularly in view of the possibility of a pyrotechnic display when the General Secretary heard of the resolution.

95—*When Rescinding May be Allowed*

Of course, one way of getting over the difficulty would be for the officials not to act on the resolution. Still, this is not a very businesslike method, and the best plan is to get the resolution off the books entirely. The Chairman, if satisfied that the altered circumstances have rendered the policy of the resolution abortive, may permit it to be rescinded by a *unanimous* vote of the members. We are on dangerous ground here, and our Chairman should be very cautious about accepting such motions. If the whole meeting were unanimously agreed on the necessity for rescinding the resolution, the commonsense plan would be to rescind it, but if objections were raised even by only a few members, the proper course would be for notice of motion to be given in the ordinary way, so that the resolution could be rescinded at the next special meeting.

96—*Suggested Exceptional Procedure*

We have stressed the need for precaution in this matter of rescinding a resolution and have seen that the safeguards are two: (a) Requiring notice of motion for any rescinding; and (b) The necessity for a special meeting, at which to do this.

All the authorities are emphatic on this point, but within our experience we have found that the second condition sometimes can be very inconvenient. This is particularly true of the meetings of executive bodies. In one sense, every meeting of such bodies is in itself a specially summoned meeting in the sense that every member receives a summons inviting him to attend. But it is not a specially summoned meeting in other respects. Normal business can be transacted, and ordinary routine affairs of the society attended to. In such circumstances, to have to call a meeting solely for the purpose of rescinding a resolution passed at a previous meeting, seems a sheer waste of money and effort.

97—*Special Meeting Unnecessary*

Such a special meeting could not touch the routine business. It could not even confirm the minutes of a previous ordinary meeting. We suggest that where every member has been supplied with a copy of the notice of motion to rescind the resolution, and where he is summoned to attend by individual letter, it would meet completely the spirit of the rule if the matter were considered at the next ordinary meeting. No harm would be done to anyone. There could be no suggestion of back-stair methods being employed. Every member of the executive would be notified of what it was intended to do, and all would have their full opportunity of being present.

98—*Summary of Chapter Four*

Mover explains his motion in a short speech. No discussion until seconded. In Committee and small meetings some discussion may be allowed before motion actually moved. This procedure entirely unsuitable for big meetings and conferences. Secunder always necessary except in Committee. Secunder may reserve speech. If no secunder, motion falls except in Committee. May be brought forward later in same meeting. When motion moved and seconded Chairman declares open for discussion. Members should speak in succession for and against motion. Those taking part called disputants. Chairman addressed as "Mr. Chairman" whether man or woman. Woman may be called "Madam Chairwoman." Member who "catches Chairman's eye" gets the floor. Continental practice allows speakers to send up names in advance to Chairman. Members speak once only on motion. Only exception mover of original motion who may reply. Time limit for speeches should be fixed by standing orders. Chairman warns speakers by tinkling his bell one minute before time expires. Extension of time allowed by consent of meeting. Chairman may end debate after asking "Are you ready to vote?" May first allow equal number of speakers for and against motion. Mover of original motion replies but introduces no new matter. Vote is taken and if motion is lost then it cannot be brought forward again. As motion is property of meeting it cannot be withdrawn without consent. No withdrawal once question has been put. If amendment moved this must first be withdrawn. Withdrawn motion may be brought up again by leave. Mover and secunder of motion or amendment may vote against own proposition. If motion is carried it becomes resolution. "Motion" and "resolution" are not synonymous terms. "Motion" is something *proposed* for consideration. "Resolution" is something *passed* after

consideration. Resolution cannot be negatived by any subsequent motion. Nor can resolution be rescinded except at subsequent meeting, and after giving notice of motion. Sometimes months may elapse before notice is allowed. This restriction on occasions is too rigid. We suggest where altered circumstances have made resolution abortive may be rescinded by unanimous consent. In other cases we suggest rescinding at ordinary meetings if all members have been notified of intention to rescind and given opportunity to attend.

CHAPTER FIVE

Paragraphs 99—119

Amending a Motion

In which we discover five groups of amendments, go into general principles concerning them, rule out a direct negative, give a reasoned amendment, take one amendment at a time, and settle the main question.

99—What is an Amendment?

So far we have dealt only with a motion to which no amendment has been moved. We must, therefore, consider what happens when somebody desires to move an amendment. No Chairman has the right to refuse a legitimate amendment to a motion which is before the meeting, and which has arisen in the ordinary course of business. We have seen that every proposition is a motion, and that to describe the various motions we give them special names. Thus, a motion which seeks to alter and improve the original motion is an amending motion. It is usually called simply an amendment. To amend a thing means to change or alter it for the better, and if amendments were not permitted, the members would have to accept or reject the whole motion. The amendment gives them the chance of improving the motion in the manner they desire.

100—Amendment Meant to be an Improvement

Of course, the question as to whether any particular amendment which is brought forward does *really improve* the original motion is a debatable question. It is the business of the members to say whether or not they consider it an improvement. But the *mover* of the amendment must *think* so, otherwise what could be his object in moving it? His idea of an improvement may be quite wrong, and he may rest assured that the members will tell him what they think about it, both in the discussion and by their manner of voting. If they agree with him, they will pass his amendment. If they think it is worse than the original motion, they will vote against it.

101—Five Groups of Amendments

Amendments are usually regarded as being in three categories, but for purposes of description we have divided them into five groups, namely :—

- (1) To add words to the original motion.
- (2) To delete or remove words from the motion.
- (3) To delete certain words only, and to substitute certain other words in the motion.
- (4) To delete practically the whole of the motion and substitute a counter-proposal.
- (5) To amend an amendment.

All these types of amendments will be described later, but for the moment we shall content ourselves by examining the principles which apply to *all* amendments.

102—General Principles Concerning Amendments

Before we proceed to deal in detail with the various classes, it is well to satisfy ourselves as to basic principles. We stated in Paragraph 99 that “amendment” is merely another name for an amending motion. Therefore, being a motion, an amendment is subject to the same general principles as any other motion. Thus an amendment, like an original motion, must be moved, seconded and discussed in accordance with the procedure outlined in Chapter Four. Those who move and second must not have spoken on the motion. Like every other motion, an amendment falls unless it is seconded, except where the standing orders provide that no seconder is needed in committee. The mover of an amendment cannot, however, reply to the discussion on his amendment.

103—Amendments Must be Relevant

The basic principle governing all amendments is that they must be absolutely and directly relevant to the original motion. Amendments which simply mutilate

a motion by leaving out words, and thus make the motion appear absurd, are frivolous and are not in order. Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether a certain amendment does really amend the motion, but, broadly speaking, any amendment which is worded in the affirmative, and which offers an *alternative* proposal to the course contained in the original motion, is a legitimate amendment. It must, of course, deal directly with the subject matter contained in the original motion.

104—Example of an Amendment

To furnish an example of an amendment we shall take a motion which was submitted to the quarterly meeting of an important co-operative society :—

“That this quarterly meeting of members declares that the National Register is a first step towards Conscription, and the regimentation of the people in civil and industrial life. As such it is a threat to the rights and liberties of Co-operators, and part of the general effort of the present Government to destroy peace and democracy.

“Therefore, this quarterly meeting requests the Political Purposes Committee to oppose any collaboration with, or support for, the machinery established in connection with the National Register.”

Notice of this motion was duly given to the members of the society, with the result that an amendment was tabled which, in truly democratic fashion, appeared together with the original motion on the notice convening the meeting. It is interesting to note that this co-operative society publishes not only the motions and amendments, but gives the names of the movers and seconders also. The amendment read :—

“Delete all after the word ‘members’ and substitute :—

‘Recognises that the taking of measures to protect as far as may be possible the lives and homes of the people is the imperative duty of any Government faced with the possibility of aerial bombardment.

‘Believes that a scheme of Voluntary National Service is essential and that successful opposition to such a scheme would lead to the introduction of compulsory service which we are determined to oppose.’”

It will be seen that not only is the *wording* of the amendment entirely different from the original motion, but the *course proposed* is a radically different one also. Very little of the motion remains other than the first word “that” which cannot under any circumstances be deleted. Nevertheless, the amendment is quite in order, and is absolutely relevant to the *subject matter* in the original motion.

105—Direct Negative is Not an Amendment

A simple direct negative is not an amendment. A direct negative means saying “no” to the original motion, and nothing more. Thus, in the case of the original motion mentioned in the last paragraph, it would not be in order to move an amendment: “That we *do not* request the Political Purposes Committee to oppose any collaboration, etc.” Even though the meeting was wholeheartedly (with the exception of the mover and seconder of the motion) in favour of the amendment, it could not be accepted. It is not enough for an amendment to refuse to take the action suggested in the motion. It must give reasons, or at least make some show of presenting an alternative course. The easiest method of saying “no” to a motion is to vote against it. That is all that is necessary to secure a negative result. But although this is true, a good debater can word an amendment in such a manner that, although it proclaims something, it nevertheless prevents an action of an affirmative character being taken.

106—A Reasoned Amendment

Time and time again on the second reading of a Bill in the House of Commons an amendment of this kind occurs. The Opposition wish to reject the Govern-

ment's Bill, but wish to have on record their reasons. An example of such an amendment occurred on a Housing Bill. A motion had been moved in the name of the Government:—

“That the Bill be read a second time.”

An amendment was then moved by a member of the Opposition:—

“To leave out from ‘That’ to the end of the Question, and to add instead thereof:—

‘This House, realising that the existing evil of overcrowding is primarily due to the shortage of houses available for letting at rents within the compass of working-class incomes, is prepared to take all necessary measures to cope with a situation which has been aggravated by the policy hitherto pursued by His Majesty’s Government, but is of opinion that the legislation now proposed involves unnecessary delay in the provision of houses, provides inadequate financial assistance to local authorities, entails unjustifiable increases in the payment of public moneys to property owners, and seeks to encourage local authorities to transfer their responsibilities to unrepresentative organisations.’”

If the amendment had merely said “That the Bill be *not* read a second time” and finished there, it would have been a direct negative. But it did something more. It affirmed and proclaimed readiness to cope with the situation and exposed the defects of the Bill.

107—Amendment to a Negative Motion

Sometimes a motion is moved, and accepted by the Chairman, “That no action be taken.” We have explained in paragraphs 44 and 45 why this is undesirable, but it is frequently moved. We have seen a Chairman in difficulties as a consequence, for when an amendment has been moved proposing some definite form of action as against the negative policy of the motion, the Chairman has declined to accept the amendment on the grounds that it was a direct negative. Clearly this is an absurdity. You cannot

have a direct negative to nothing, which is precisely what the motion proposes. The mere fact that the amendment proposes to take any positive action entitles it to come before the meeting.

108—Several Amendments May be Moved

Several amendments may be moved to the same original motion. These must not conflict with the business already decided upon, and must not be substantially the same as any previous motion or amendment. Nor must they be frivolous. There is a further restriction. If an amendment has been moved and carried to alter the last part of an original motion, no amendment can be moved afterwards to alter an earlier part of the motion. This is a very tricky procedure, and the Chairman must keep his eyes open, so as not to shut out legitimate amendments inadvertently.

109—One Amendment Taken at a Time

It is a cardinal rule that, when an amendment has been moved and seconded, no other amendment may be discussed until that amendment has been disposed of. The object of this provision is quite clear. If two amendments were being discussed at once, confusion would inevitably result. The standing orders of some bodies, however, do make it permissible for *notice* of further amendments to be given while the first amendment is being discussed. This, indeed, is very necessary in some circumstances, but the matter ends there for the time being. Notice is given, but *no discussion* takes place until the first amendment has been put to the vote and disposed of.

110—Withdrawal

If the mover of an amendment desires to withdraw it, the Chairman must ask the seconder whether he also is willing to allow this. If he is, the members present must be asked whether or not anyone objects to the withdrawal. If no one objects the Chairman can permit the amendment to be withdrawn immediately, but should any member object to the withdrawal then the amendment must stand. No application for the withdrawal of an amendment can be entertained once the question has been put from the chair, when the vote is about to be taken.

111—Debate on an Amendment

It should be noted that when an amendment is moved and seconded, it raises a *separate* issue from that raised by the original motion. Consequently, any member is at liberty to speak on the amendment, even though he has already spoken during the debate on the original motion. A member who has spoken on the original motion cannot, however, move or second an amendment to that motion, nor may he move an amendment to any subsequent *amendments*. His powers are restricted to *speaking* on the subject. Unless this very necessary restriction is made, speakers might go on for ever. First a member might speak on the original motion, then he could move an amendment to that motion, and could go on moving further amendments *ad lib*. The only remedy in such an event would be a motion for the closure. The rule is that no person may move or second more than one amendment to the same original motion. These restrictions apply, of course, to all further amendments. When the debate on the first amendment is finished, the mover of the original motion is allowed to reply to the discussion.

112—Amendment Given Precedence Over Original Motion

The amendment is put to the vote immediately after the mover of the original motion has replied. There is an important point to notice here. There are two propositions before the meeting: (*a*) the original motion, and (*b*) the amendment. Now, one would naturally expect that the original motion would be put to the *vote first*, because it was *moved first*, but this is not the case. In the House of Commons the original motion *is* put first, with one single exception, a simple amendment to add words. In all other cases in the House, the original motion takes precedence over the amendment. But it is the invariable practice in all meetings outside the House to put the *amendment* to the vote first. There is no logical reason why the amendment should be put first, except the rather arbitrary assumption that it raises a secondary issue which ought to be determined before the original motion, which raises the main issue, is dealt with. The precedent, however, is so firmly established as to leave the Chairman no alternative but to follow the custom that tradition has hallowed.

113—Putting the Amendment to the Vote

Let it be remembered that the amendment raises a separate issue. First we had the original motion, and at that stage the *only question* before the members was: "Shall we accept or reject the course proposed in this original motion?" This is called the *main question*, because it is the principal issue. When an amendment is put forward, however, it challenges the *right* of the original motion to stand as the main question. It thereby raises a *new* issue, and the members have now a *second* question to decide, namely: "Shall the original motion or the amendment stand as the main question?" Which of the two shall remain until we

make our final decision?" It follows that as there are *two questions* to be settled, there must be *two decisions* given by the members.

114—Settling the Main Question

The members have *first* to choose between the rival merits of the amendment and the original motion. *Both* of these cannot stand as the main question. One of them must first be removed. That is the preliminary question which must be decided by the members before they can deal with the more serious issue. They must eliminate one of the two from further discussion, and they must do this by voting against the one they dislike most. If no further amendments have been moved when this preliminary trial of strength has been decided, the motion which survives (i.e., the original motion or the amendment) must once again be put. This time it will be the *final* vote on the main question, when the members will have the opportunity of adopting or rejecting it altogether. They are perfectly free to do either.

115—Successful Amendment Becomes Substantive

Having seen that there are two questions to decide, we shall keep this in mind while we are tracing the amendment through its career. Let us return to the point where it is put against the original motion, to decide the preliminary question as to which shall stand as the main question. The votes are then taken for and against the amendment. If the majority vote against it, it is declared lost, and, if desired, a further amendment may be moved. If, on the other hand, the majority vote in favour of the amendment, it is declared carried, and thereby displaces the original motion from its proud position. It shoulders

the latter out of the way, and takes its place. The original motion then automatically *disappears*, and is buried forthwith.

116—*Defeated Motion Disappears*

This point is somewhat difficult for beginners to understand. They think, "Yes, we have voted on the amendment, but what about the original motion? That has not been put yet. Surely we shall be asked to vote on it?" This is not so. The members, by voting for the amendment, have said in effect, "We prefer this amendment. We don't want the motion." They have excluded the original motion, and it has ceased to exist. Consequently, no vote *can* be taken on it. It is finished with and we must think no more about it. Let us think about the victorious amendment instead.

117—*Substantive Means a Separate Motion*

When an amendment is carried, it would cause confusion if the successful amendment was referred to as "the motion." It therefore changes its name, and is henceforward called the "substantive motion." The term "substantive motion" means a separate or distinct motion. In other words, an independent motion with a body and soul of its own. Sometimes it is called an "amended" motion, and occasionally Chairmen refer to it as "The motion in its amended form," the terms being interchangeable. We shall throughout call it the substantive motion.

118—*Substantive Motion May Itself be Amended*

Still further amendments may be moved to a substantive motion, the procedure being exactly the same as in the case of an amendment to an original motion, except that the mover of the substantive

motion is not allowed the right of reply. Further amendments are subject to the general restrictions mentioned in paragraphs 102 and 103. Only one such amendment is considered at a time, and each is put to the vote in its turn. If successful, the further amendment takes the place of the substantive motion, just in the same way as the latter supplanted the original motion. The victorious further amendment then becomes the *new* substantive motion. Finally, it is put to the vote as the main question, and, if carried, then becomes a resolution.

119—Summary of Chapter Five

Amendment seeks to alter original motion. Five kinds—(1) to add words ; (2) delete words ; (3) substitute words ; (4) make counter-proposals ; (5) amendment to amendment. Amendments subject to same general rules as motions. Worded in affirmative and relevant. Direct negative not an amendment. Reasoned amendment sets out grounds for rejecting motion. Several amendments may be moved to same motion. Taken one at a time. Amendment cannot be withdrawn if anyone dissents. No application for withdrawal can be entertained when once question has been put. Cannot be moved or seconded by members who have spoken. But latter may speak on amendment. No member may move more than one amendment to the same motion. Amendments always put to the vote first except in the House of Commons. Even there amendments to insert words only are put first. Amendment raises an additional issue. Two questions now to be decided—(1) preliminary contest between amendment and original motion ; (2) main question. Preliminary issue taken first and whichever survives (subject to being further amended) is put finally as main question. If amendment is carried on first vote it knocks original motion into oblivion and takes its place. Successful amendment then called amended or substantive motion. May itself be subsequently amended. Whichever survives when finally carried as main question becomes resolution.

CHAPTER SIX

Paragraphs 120—151

Amendments in General

Is another long one about amendments to add, to delete and to substitute, with descriptions of the rough and ready procedure of counter-amendments. Shows how to amend an amendment, puts you wise on financial amendments, insists on amendments being taken in sequence, and throughout stresses the importance of the main question.

120—*Definition of Addendum*

It was stated in paragraph 101 that there were five groups of amendments, and we shall now deal with the first group. An amendment which seeks to *add* words to the original motion is called *an addendum*. It is frequently called a *rider*. Where there are several such amendments they are called addenda and *not* addendums. It may be an additional clause, sentence, phrase, or merely one word, which someone desires to tack on to the original motion. An amendment can (subject to the provisions of paragraph 108) be inserted at any part of the original motion, providing it preserves the sense of the motion.

121—*Moving an Addendum*

To illustrate the procedure on an addendum, let us take, for example, a motion which we will suppose to have been moved and seconded :

“That this meeting declares its determined opposition to any attempt to establish conscription on a permanent basis in this country, believing this to be a menace to the industrial freedom of the workers.”

Some militant member seeing in this all the possibilities of conscripts being called up to break legitimate strikes, as he knows to have been done elsewhere, thinks the motion is only a *pious* one. Undeterred by legal penalties, he rises and says, “I propose an addendum, Mr. Chairman, to add to the end of the original motion the words, ‘and pledges itself to take strike action if necessary to defeat any such attacks on our liberties’.” The Chairman enquires, “Does any member second the addendum?” If somebody does so, the Chairman then announces, “The addendum is open for discussion.”

122—*Accepting an Addendum Without a Vote*

Possibly the mover and seconder of the original motion may think it advisable to accept the addendum

without its being put to the vote. In such cases many Chairmen at once add the addendum to the motion without troubling to ask the members generally what *they* think about it. This is quite wrong, and its unfairness will be apparent when it is remembered that some of those present may be quite willing to vote for the original motion by itself, but *not* for the original motion *plus* the addendum. The addendum mentioned in paragraph 121 raises a very serious issue, and one on which opinions may be divided. Practically all the members may be in favour of *making a protest*, but very few might care to pledge themselves to take *strike* action to enforce it.

123—Vote Must be Taken if Any Dissent

What position would those members be in if the Chairman allowed the addendum to be added without their being consulted and given an opportunity of voting against it? If the addendum were added to the motion they would certainly be committed to strike action, as the motion would then read :

“ That this meeting declares its determined opposition to any attempt to establish conscription on a permanent basis in this country, believing this to be a menace to the industrial freedom of the workers, *and pledges itself to take strike action if necessary to defeat any such attack on our liberties.* ”

They are given the choice of accepting the *whole* proposition, or of voting against it. There would be no half-way house for them. Of course, they might attempt to move an amendment to delete all reference to strike action. This would not only be cumbersome, but with such a Chairman it might be ruled out of order. The proper course is for the Chairman, as soon as the addendum is moved and seconded, to ask whether *anybody* objects to the amendment being added to the original motion. Even if one member only objects, the addendum must be debated and put to the vote, like any other amendment. Of course, if nobody objects the addendum may be added at once.

124—Voting on Amendment to Add Words

In the case of dissent, the debate proceeds on the addendum and finally the Chairman rises to put the question. He says: "The original motion is:

"That this meeting declares its determined opposition to any attempt to establish conscription on a permanent basis in this country, believing this to be a menace to the industrial freedom of the workers."

An amendment has been moved to add to the original motion the words:

"And pledges itself to take strike action if necessary to defeat any such attack on our liberties."

All those in favour of the amendment please show." The votes are then counted for, and afterwards against, the amendment. If the majority vote for the amendment, he announces: "The amendment is carried." If, on the other hand, the majority are against it, he declares: "The amendment is lost."

125—Wrong Method of Putting the Question

Sometimes the Chairman puts the question in this manner: "All those in favour of the amendment?" Then: "All those in favour of the original motion?" This is to be deprecated. He should never refer to the original motion at all. It is the amendment on which the members are voting. They are really being asked: "Do you want this amendment or not?" If they vote in favour of the amendment, it is equivalent to saying: "We do want the amendment." If they vote against it, they practically say: "Clear this amendment from the field of debate." In either case, their minds are fixed on the amendment.

126—Don't Mention the Motion

Similarly, when the result of the voting is being announced, the Chairman in the case of the amendment being carried should *never* say: "The original

motion is lost." It seems a small difference only between the right and the wrong methods, but the right one prevents the members from becoming confused. If the wrong method is used, they would be quite perplexed when the Chairman later asked them to vote on the main question. They would not know what they were voting for. They would naturally think: "Why, we have already voted on both the amendment *and* the original motion. The Chairman said so himself. Why does he want to put it again?" We have seen this confusion result on dozens of occasions from the use of the wrong method. Hence the necessity for care.

127—*Alternative Addendum*

The first vote is the eliminating round, and whichever proposition survives must be put *again* as the main question. Let us assume that more members voted against the addendum than for it, and the Chairman had declared, "The addendum is lost." It would still be open to anyone else in the meeting to propose another amendment, unless the standing orders or customary procedure required notice to have been given before the first amendment was put. As we are considering only at this stage amendments to add, or addenda, let us suppose that some members, whilst considering that the defeated addendum went too far in the way of unconstitutional action, feel that something should be added to strengthen the original motion. One of them might propose to add these words:

"And that we call upon the Trades Union Congress to exercise the utmost pressure on the Government to ensure that conscripts will not be used as strike breakers in the case of a trade dispute."

This is a much more moderate proposition, and we shall anticipate that the Chairman has taken the vote on the new addendum and has declared it to be carried.

128—*Voting on Main Question*

The meeting by this time would probably be fed up and not disposed to consider further amendments. If none were forthcoming, the Chairman would then put the successful amendment (now added to the original motion, and called a substantive motion), as the *main question*. He would say, "The original motion as amended is :

"That this meeting declares its determined opposition to any attempt to establish conscription on a permanent basis in this country, believing this to be a menace to the industrial freedom of the workers, and calls upon the Trades Union Congress to exercise the utmost pressure on the Government to ensure that conscripts will not be used as strike breakers in the case of a trade dispute."

All those in favour of this as a substantive motion please show." The votes would then be taken for and against, and if carried, the substantive motion would become a *resolution*. If the amendment had been defeated on the first vote, and no further amendments were moved, it would, of course, be put in its original form as the main question. This procedure applies to all the examples given later.

129—*Amendment to Delete Words*

Now let us turn to a different kind of amendment. Suppose that the subject under discussion was old-age pensions. Some member, having knowledge of the hard lot of the old people, and having read something of Labour's Pensions Plan, might move a motion :

"That this meeting expresses its concern at the necessity for thousands of old-age pensioners having to apply for public assistance, and pledges itself to secure the raising of old-age pensions to £1 per week with 35s. 0d. for married couples, such pensions to be payable at the age of 60. It further calls upon the Parliamentary Labour Party to press this proposal in the House of Commons."

Such a motion would find a ready seconder, but there might be others present who consider that it would be impracticable to secure both an increased

pension, and a lowering of the age to 60, at the same time. They might also feel that it was tying the hands of the Parliamentary Labour Party too tightly. They could move an amendment to delete any words or any number of words in the original motion.

130—*Motion Becomes Pious*

This did four things. First, it set out the hardships of the old people. Secondly, it pledged itself to secure a raising of the pension. Thirdly, it prescribed the amount and the age at which it was to be received. Fourthly, it called upon the Labour Party in Parliament to take action. It is the third and fourth parts of the motion which are objected to. Some member might accordingly say :

“ I move an amendment that all words after ‘ married couples ’ be deleted.”

When this had been seconded and discussed the mover of the original motion would be given the opportunity to ventilate his disgust at the amendment, which he might regard as making his *positive* motion merely a *pious* expression of opinion. After the mover's reply the Chairman would rise and say, “ The original motion is (here reading the original motion) the amendment is ‘ to delete all words after “ married couples.” ’ ”

131—*Voting on the Deletion*

The vote would then be taken for and against the amendment. If it was carried, the original motion would be altered accordingly, and would then be called the *amended* motion. If it was not further amended, it would be put again in the same form, this time as the *main question*. In doing this the Chairman would say, “ The amended motion is :

“ That this meeting expresses its concern at the necessity for thousands of old-age pensioners having to apply for public assistance, and pledges itself to secure the raising of old-age pensions to £1 per week, with 35s. for married couples.”

All those in favour of this as a substantive motion." If carried, it would then become a resolution. If, on the other hand, the amendment was defeated on the first vote, the original motion would be open to further amendment, and would be finally put as the main question, either in its original or amended form.

132—No Amendment to Earlier Part

It was pointed out in paragraph 108 that when an amendment has been moved to alter the latter part of a motion no amendment can be moved later in the discussion to alter the first part. This requires a little explanation. Take the motion in paragraph 129. We saw that this fell into four parts. The amendment was moved to the third and fourth parts. Now the mere fact that this amendment was moved, accepted by the Chair, and put to the vote, would prevent anybody moving an amendment to the first or second parts later on during the debate.

133—Amendments must be in Sequence

It is quite immaterial whether the amendment to the last half was *carried* or not. Even if it was lost, the effect would be the same. No amendment could then be moved to any word or words in the original motion in front of the word "couples." Not even the alteration of one word could be permitted. There is more in this point than meets the eye. Supposing that there were several amendments proposed to an original motion. Some would deal with one part, and some with others. It is the Chairman's duty to see that the amendments are put in their proper sequence. Some people think that the amendment which is handed up to the Chairman first must be put first, irrespective of the part of the motion with which it deals. This is incorrect. Those amendments which deal with the first part of the

motion must be *put* first. Those which deal with the middle, the next, and those which deal with the last part must be put last. If, instead of this, the Chairman takes an amendment dealing with the last portion, and allows this to be discussed and put to the vote before the others, *any amendments dealing with an earlier part of the motion will be automatically barred from discussion*. We do not suggest such rigid procedure is suitable for branch meetings, but it is as well all should know what *is* the right method.

134—Amendment to Substitute Words

We now come to the third class of amendment which proposes to delete certain words only from the original motion, and substitute certain other words. For an example of this type of amendment, we will assume that the following motion has been moved and seconded :

“ That this meeting declares that the time is ripe when the railways of the country should be nationalised, and asserts that in acquiring such undertakings the Government should pay compensation only in cases of proved hardship to stockholders.”

This motion might appear objectionable to certain of those present on the grounds first, that it is not comprehensive enough, and secondly, that it ignores the competition between road and rail transport and would do nothing to solve that problem. Furthermore, the provision as to compensation might furnish very great difficulties politically as the proposal would in effect mean partial confiscation of shareholders' property. Those who thought on these lines might move an amendment :

“ To delete all words after ‘ asserts ’ on line two, and to substitute the following :

‘ That only by the co-ordination of all forms of public transport under public ownership and control, will it be possible adequately to deal with the problems of transport generally, and calls upon the Government to acquire existing transport undertakings under equitable terms of purchase, and to co-ordinate them under a National Transport Board ? ’ ”

135—*Voting on Amendment to Substitute*

The Chairman, in putting the question would say :
 “ The original motion is (here reading the motion in full) ; the amendment is :

To delete all words after ‘ asserts ’ on line two, and substitute the following :

‘ That only by the co-ordination of all forms of public transport under public ownership and control, will it be possible adequately to deal with the problems of transport generally ’ (etc., etc. . . .).

All those in favour of the amendment.”

He would then take the vote and if the majority voted in favour of the amendment the Chairman would then put it as a substantive motion. He would say, “ The amended motion is :

‘ That this meeting declares that the time is ripe when the railways of the country should be nationalised, and asserts *that only by the co-ordination of all forms of public transport under public ownership and control will it be possible adequately to deal with the problems of transport generally, and calls upon the Government to acquire existing transport undertakings under equitable terms of purchase, and to co-ordinate them under a National Transport Board.* ’ ”

The voting would then be taken and the substantive motion, if carried, would thereby become a resolution.

136—*Notice of Further Amendments*

It was stated in paragraph 109 that several amendments could be moved to an original motion, but that no consideration could be given to any second amendment until the first had been disposed of. In the writer’s opinion, the discussion in the majority of meetings could be condensed by the standing orders making it necessary that notice of any further amendment should be given before the first amendment is put to the vote. This would mean that a

member who desired to move a further amendment would have to make up his mind early in the debate and *give notice* before the first vote was taken.

137—Notice Shortens Debate

We cannot see any great hardship in this method. It certainly tends to prevent the discussion becoming protracted, because members must give notice expeditiously or for ever hold their peace. Of course, it is quite in order even with the procedure mentioned, for the Chairman to accept notice of more than one further amendment, providing these conform to the general principles laid down. No discussion is allowed at that stage. The Chairman merely accepts the notice and the matter ends until the first amendment has been put to the vote.

138—Counter-Amendments

At branch meetings members who desire to move an amendment do not usually follow the formal procedure prescribed. They generally repeat the motion and insert any alterations they desire to make. Supposing the original motion was :

“ That the Trades Council be urged to prepare a scheme for the building of a Trades Hall, and to ask the unions to contribute 2d. per member towards the initial cost.”

Some member may believe in the proposal to build a Trades Hall, but may think that all unions should contribute, not the same amount *per member*, but the same *total* amount each towards initiating the scheme. If he were to follow the formal course prescribed he would move :

“ That all the words after ‘ contribute ’ be deleted, and the following substituted : ‘ an equal amount each to the initial cost ’.”

But one can imagine the confusion which would arise at branch meetings where the motions are not

usually put in writing, and where even the Chairman has difficulty sometimes in following the exact wording.

139—Simplicity of Counter-Amendments

The usual procedure would be for such members to move :

“ That the Trades Council be urged to prepare a scheme for the building of a Trades Hall, and to ask *each union* to contribute *an equal amount to the initial cost.*”

This is then put as a counter-amendment or *substitute* for the entire original motion. It is then voted upon by the meeting as such. No great exception can be taken to this, and although it is not strictly in accordance with the rules of debate, it is much better than the formal proceedings from the point of view of clarity and simplicity. This variation in procedure, however, does not relieve the Chairman from the necessity of putting either the original motion or the counter-amendment, whichever remains, to the vote again as the *main question*.

140—Amendment to an Amendment

During the debate on an amendment, certain weaknesses may be revealed in the amendment itself. It may appear that if these defects were removed the amendment would be much superior to the motion itself. But how can they be removed? Is it the best plan to wait until the amendment has been voted on, and then move a further amendment to the surviving motion which will retain the good points of the amendment while *omitting* its defects? As the politicians say, “ The answer is in the negative.” First, because there is an easier course, and secondly, because there is a danger that any subsequent attempt to amend might be ruled out of order as being substantially the same as the previous amendment. The alternative course is to move an amendment

to the amendment. Such amendments may be moved at any time *before* the amendment under discussion is put to the vote.

141—Form of Amendment to Amendment

Let us suppose a discussion has arisen concerning food prices in time of war, and that an original motion has been moved and seconded to this effect :

“ That this meeting calls attention to the dangers of profiteering in the food of the people in time of war, and declares that the Government should organise and control the distribution of essential foodstuffs to the community.”

To this an amendment might be moved and seconded :

“ That this meeting requests the Labour Party in Parliament to urge upon the Government the necessity, in any scheme for the organisation of the essential food supplies of the community, of consulting the Co-operative Movement.”

142—Difference Between Amendments

The main difference between the original motion and the amendment is that the latter insists upon bringing in the Co-operative Movement. Some member may think the amendment an improvement on the original motion, but that it requires strengthening. He therefore says, “ I move, Mr. Chairman, that we amend the amendment to read :

‘ That this meeting *calls* upon the Parliamentary Labour Party to *demand* that the Government *immediately* proceed to organise the *production* and distribution of essential foodstuffs, and to *utilise to the fullest extent the services of the Co-operative Movement by establishing a Central Co-ordinating Board, on which the National Authority of the Co-operative Movement shall be adequately represented.*’ ”

When a seconder is forthcoming the amendment to the amendment is open for discussion.

143—*Methods of Amending*

For the sake of description we will refer to the amendment itself as the first amendment. The moving of an amendment to the first amendment has raised a new issue. Just in the same way as the first amendment contests the right of the original motion to stand as the main question, so does this new-comer challenge the right of the first amendment to be put against the original motion. Its quarrel is not for the moment with the original motion, but with the first amendment. It says in effect: "Look here, I have a better right to stand against the original motion than you have." "Have you?" says the first amendment, "we shall see about that. I will fight you for the position as to which of us shall stand against the original motion." Seeing that it is a quarrel between the two amendments, the common-sense course for the original motion to take, is to get out of the way until the battle is over.

144—*Original Motion Retires Temporarily*

This is just what does happen. Whenever an amendment to an amendment is moved, the original motion retires for the time being from the debate, leaving the two amendments with the field to themselves. The original motion does not come forward again until the struggle between the two amendments has been fought out. The first amendment takes the place of the original motion, and is treated just as though it was the original motion, except of course that the mover of the amendment has no right of reply. The Chairman should explain this procedure, so that the members will understand what is going to be done.

145—*One Amendment Put Against the Other*

After the subject has been discussed, the Chairman, in putting the question, says : " The first amendment is :

' That this meeting requests the Labour Party in Parliament to urge upon the Government the necessity in any scheme for the organisation of the essential food supplies of the community, of consulting the Co-operative Movement.'

" Since then an amendment has been moved to alter the amendment, so that it will read :

' That this meeting *calls* upon the Parliamentary Labour Party to *demand* that the Government *immediately* proceed to organise the *production* and distribution of essential foodstuffs and to *utilise to the fullest extent the services of the Co-operative Movement by establishing a Central Co-ordinating Board on which the National Authority of the Co-operative Movement shall be adequately represented.*'

All those in favour of these words being substituted for the first amendment please show."

This settled, the original motion comes back into the debate again, and discussion proceeds on the surviving amendment which now challenges the right of the motion to stand as the main question. It is now treated as an ordinary amendment and at the end of the debate the mover of the original motion replies to the discussion. The vote is then taken for and against the amendment as described in paragraphs 112 to 116. If it is lost it is finished with, but if it is carried it is put finally to the vote as the main question.

146—*Necessity for Putting the Main Question*

At the risk of wearying the reader, we shall deal with the main question again. We would not dwell on the point but for the fact that we have observed not only at branch and local Labour meetings, but in a large number of other meetings also, that the Chairmen by the manner in which they conduct

the voting, deprive members of the right *to vote* on the main question. Their method is simply to read the original motion and the amendment to the meeting, and whichever is carried, subject to being further amended, is declared to be the resolution.

147—Main Question Not a Formal Vote

Chairmen may argue that it is ridiculous to have to put the question again to the vote. Nobody would be foolish enough to want to reject both the original motion and the amendment after having spent a considerable time in discussing it. We read in a handbook on debate on this point :

“The second vote is purely formal. No one would vote against it (a successful amendment) as a resolution who has voted in its favour as an amendment.”

We do not agree. The members are *bound* to choose either the original motion or the amendment on the first vote, and they might have voted for the amendment, not because they approved of it, but because it was the lesser of two evils.

148—Example of a Financial Motion

To illustrate the importance of the main question, let us suppose a member wants a grant of money made to some political body with which he is connected. Knowing the procedure of his branch is as shown in paragraph 146, he approaches his friends before the meeting and arranges for two of them to move and second an amendment to a motion which he arranges to move. When the meeting takes place he moves, and someone seconds :

“That £10 be granted to the local branch of the Constitutional Anarchists’ Society.”

His friends then move an amendment :

“That £15 be granted.”

Assuming no further amendment is forthcoming and the Chairman adopts the irregular procedure mentioned in paragraph 146, he would put the question: "The original motion is:

'That £10 be granted to the local branch of the Constitutional Anarchists' Society.'

The amendment is:

'That £15 be granted.' "

The vote is then taken, and whichever is carried he declares to be the resolution. Now in what position are members who are dead against any money at all being given? If they vote against the amendment and it is lost, the motion granting £10 will be carried, and they have been made a party to a proceeding to which they are entirely opposed.

149—Main Question a Precaution

Now, what would happen if the question was put in the proper manner? The amendment would be put first, and members opposed to giving money would vote against it. If the amendment was defeated and the original motion carried, the Chairman would put the latter again as the main question:

"That £10 be granted to the local branch of the Constitutional Anarchists' Society."

The votes would then be taken for and against this question, and members who are not in favour of £10 being granted would vote against this also. They would have thus voted strictly in accordance with their principles.

150—Settling One Point at a Time

A safe method is first to decide the main question as to whether *any* money shall be given. This can be done by moving a motion dealing solely with the *principle* of granting any money or none, without

stating the amount. Then, supposing this to have been decided in the affirmative, to deal with the question of amount as a further motion. But this is not always possible, particularly in the case of motions containing several clauses.

151—*Summary of Chapter Six*

Amendment to add called addendum. If mover accepts and no one dissents may be added without a vote. Wrong to add without consulting members, who would thus be compelled to vote against their wishes or to move an amendment. If anyone dissents must be voted upon. Chairman reads original motion and addendum, and then says "All in favour of addendum," then "All those against." He should never say "All those in favour of addendum," and afterwards "All those in favour of original motion." This confuses members. Surviving motion put finally as main question. Amendments to delete must also be put quite distinctly. Other amendments seek both to delete words and substitute others. Votes taken for and against. Good plan to insist upon notice of further amendment before first one put. Prevents unnecessary amendments. Counter-amendments most usual at branch meetings and are substituted for original motion. Simpler than former procedure. Still necessary for survivor to be put as main question. All amendments should be put in strict sequence. This means order in which they occur in motion. If amendment to later part is accepted and put to vote this debars amendments to earlier part from being considered subsequently. An amendment to alter another amendment raises a new issue. It disputes right of first amendment to stand against original motion. Latter retires until vote settles this. Then comes back into the field. Main question must always be put, otherwise members may be forced to vote for proposition they dislike. Where possible settle one point at a time, especially on financial questions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Paragraphs 152—187

Closing Debate

Explains how Chairman may close debate, but if feeling runs high better to do this by motion. Tells how Gladstone established the modern closure, shows how to shelve inconvenient questions, how to lop off discussion by the Guillotine, and how to jump over amendments by the Kangaroo: also how the weary ones may close the meeting and go home.

152—Closing Debate by a Motion

We have suggested that the Chairman should use his discretion as to closing the debate. The standing orders of some bodies expressly give this power. The Trades Union Congress Standing Order reads :

“Should the President of Congress consider that there is no practical difference of opinion among the delegates, he shall have power to stop the discussion and submit the proposition to the vote of Congress.”

Even where the standing orders do not specifically lay this down the Chairman is within his rights in doing so. But in certain instances it would be impossible for him to close the debate on his own initiative, without leaving himself open to the charge of being biased. This is particularly true where the discussion has aroused strong feelings, or where a very important decision is to be made. There is always a danger in such cases that, if the Chairman closes the debate “off his own bat,” he may be accused of favouring one side of the case to the detriment of the other.

153—Three Kinds of Motion

In such cases it is advisable that the debate be closed by means of a definite motion moved from the body of the meeting. There are several methods whereby this may be done, and these fall under three main divisions: (*a*) motions which call for an immediate decision on the question at issue, (*b*) motions which shelve the subject indefinitely, (*c*) motions which postpone a decision until a future date. Those in categories (*b*) and (*c*) are called “dilatory motions,” because they delay matters. The method of breaking the quorum, mentioned in paragraph 31 is merely a discreditable subterfuge, and is not regarded as a legitimate method of closing a debate. Hence we shall not discuss it here.

154—Chairman May Refuse

These three kinds of motions may be moved at any time (except the "previous question" which cannot be moved on an amendment) but only by those members who have not previously taken part in the debate. Otherwise it could be used very unfairly by members who had already had their say, but wanted to deprive others from expressing the opposite point of view. Movers have no right of reply, nor (with the exception of the motion for the adjournment) can such motions be amended. They cannot be moved on top of one another. If any motion in divisions (a), (b) or (c) has been moved and defeated, no other motion in these categories may be accepted by the Chairman until the debate on the main question has been allowed to continue for a reasonable time. The Chairman may refuse to accept any of these motions if used solely for obstructive purposes, or if he considers they are an abuse of procedure. Alternatively he may put them without discussion.

155—The Origin of the Closure

The origin of the closure in its modern form in this country may be ascribed to Mr. Gladstone who, in a speech in Parliament in 1882, referred to the necessity for dealing with obstructive tactics on the part of some Members. Like many other good ideas it was borrowed from the Continent, and although it was vigorously denounced by the then Opposition as an unwarranted interference with the liberty of debate, it was carried after a discussion *extending over 19 sittings*. This incidentally rather showed the need there was for the simple device which Gladstone proposed, "That the question be now put."

156—Gladstone Moves Closure

Gladstone suggested that the closure must be supported by 200 Members or more, and if less than 40 Members

voted against it, it should not be carried unless 100 voted in its favour. The initiative for putting forward this motion was, however, left to the Speaker or Chairman, and it was not until three years later that the Speaker summoned up sufficient courage to invade the "liberties" of the Members by putting such a motion. In 1887 the then Conservative Government proposed that any *Member* might move the closure motion with the consent of the Chair. This was eventually carried after 14 *sittings*, on the 18th March, 1887. The initiative had thus been transferred from the Speaker to the Members, but it was still necessary to obtain the prescribed numbers in its support, before the closure became effective. In the following year the 200 required was reduced to 100, at which it remains to-day.

157—Moving the Closure

In cases where a debate appears to be unduly long, or the subject seems to have been fully discussed, anyone who has not already spoken may move "That the question be now put." This is called the *closure*, a term derived from the French word *clôture*, meaning the authoritative closing of a debate. It is frequently described as "the vote." Sometimes a member contents himself by merely saying, "I move the vote, Mr. Chairman." Whichever term is used the object is the same. It means that, in the opinion of the mover, the debate has been carried on long enough, and he asks the meeting to agree with him by passing his motion and so ending the discussion.

158—When to Move the Closure

It is in order to move the closure at any time during the debate, but the standing orders of many bodies prescribe that the discussion must have proceeded for a definite length of time. The whole idea of

the closure is to facilitate business, but it must be used fairly and not to stifle legitimate discussion. The closure is not an amendment, but a distinct motion, and it takes precedence over all other business. Even though a speaker is addressing a meeting, it is quite in order for a member to move it, and the speaker must thereupon resume his seat.

159—How Closure is Applied

The Chairman must accept the motion when it has been seconded and he should put it to the meeting immediately. No discussion may be allowed on the motion for the closure. If it is carried the vote on the original motion must be put, the mover being first given the opportunity to reply to the discussion. When an amendment is before the meeting and the closure is moved, it applies to that amendment only, and *not* to the original motion. In such cases, if the closure is carried, the amendment is put to the meeting in the manner stated above, but the discussion on the *main question* may then be continued until another member rises and moves, "That the vote be now taken on the main question." If the motion for the closure is lost, it cannot be again moved until the discussion has been continued for a reasonable time.

160—Guillotine

Another form of closure is brought about by what is called the Guillotine; a method which was first adopted in Parliament. Under this procedure the House of Commons by resolution fixes a time-table for each of the stages of discussion on a Bill. It is only used as a rule when the Bill is in Committee or upon the Report stage. The arrangement works in such a fashion that when the time fixed by the schedule is reached, no matter at what stage the debate may be, the vote must be taken forthwith. No mover can be allowed to reply or anything of that

kind. The closure descends like a guillotine and cuts off any further debate. When in May, 1939, the Military Training Bill and Reserve and Auxiliary Forces Bill were to be discussed by the House, a motion was passed after debate, despite the protest of the Opposition, fixing definite time limits whereby the Bill was to be expeditiously passed.

161—Guillotine in Operation

This motion was very detailed and it is impossible to reproduce it here. It will be sufficient to give the time-table on the Military Training Bill to show how the Guillotine worked :

“ A. MILITARY TRAINING BILL.

(1) COMMITTEE STAGE.

Five allotted days shall be given to the proceedings on any instructions relating to the Bill and to the Committee stage of the Bill, and the proceedings on each allotted day shall be as shown in the second column of the following table, and those proceedings shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at the time shown in the third column for that day :

<i>Allotted Day.</i>	<i>Proceedings.</i>	<i>Time for bringing Proceedings to a conclusion.</i>
TABLE.		
First	Proceedings on Instructions, and	
	Clause 1	10.0 p.m.
	Clause 2	12.0 midnight
Second	Clause 3	8.30 p.m.
	Clause 4	12.0 midnight
Third	Clause 5	7.30 p.m.
	Clause 6	—
Fourth	Clause 6	7.30 p.m.
	Clauses 7 to 17	12.0 midnight
Fifth	New Clauses	7.30 p.m.
	Schedule, new Schedules, and any other matter necessary to bring the Committee Stage to a conclusion.	12.0 midnight

(2) REPORT STAGE AND THIRD READING.

One allotted day (not being a Friday) shall be given to the Report stage and Third Reading of the Bill and the proceedings thereon shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 11 p.m. on that day.”

162—Guillotine at Labour Party Conference

At the Annual Conference of the Labour Party this method has been employed in recent years because of the heavily overloaded Agenda. The Conference Arrangements Committee (which is in reality the Standing Orders Committee) comes forward immediately after the Chairman's opening address with proposals as to the order in which business shall be conducted. It fixes the time which will be allowed for each subject. Here is an extract from the report submitted to the Conference at Southport, in May, 1939 :

“ THURSDAY :

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 9.30 a.m.—11.0 a.m. | Popular Front. Executive Committee Report page 43, Agenda pages 16/19. |
| 11.0 a.m.—11.30 a.m. | Imperial and Colonial Policy, Agenda pages 45/47, Composite Resolution No. 9. |
| 11.30 a.m.—12.10 p.m. | Executive Committee Report and Resolutions. |
| 12.10 p.m.—12.30 p.m. | Fraternal Delegate—H. H. Elvin, from the Trades Union Congress. |
| 2.0 p.m. — 3.0 p.m. | Rural and Backward Areas, Executive Committee Report pages 67/68, Agenda pages 24/25. Composite Resolution No. 10. |
| 3.0 p.m. — 3.30 p.m. | League of Youth, Executive Committee Report pages 80/81, Appendix XII, page 221, Agenda pages 26/27. |
| 3.30 p.m.— 5.0 p.m. | Executive Committee Report and Resolutions.” |

163—Time-table Requires Approval

We have only given one day because of considerations of space, but it will serve to illustrate the method. The suggested programme is always moved by the Chairman of the Conference Arrangements Committee, and seconded usually by a delegate from the floor of the hall. It is competent for any delegate to move an amendment to refer back the report, but usually

speeches are frowned upon as it is considered that the delegates should be able to make up their minds without debate. Once adopted, the time-table comes into operation automatically, although not with quite so much rigidity as is employed in Parliament.

164—*The Kangaroo*

Another method of closure which has grown up in recent years is known as the Kangaroo. Under this, when any motion or Bill is before the House of Commons, either in Committee of the whole House or on Report, the Speaker or Chairman is empowered to select which clauses or amendments shall be put to the vote. Often the order paper is littered with amendments. Many of these deal with the same point and may be substantially similar to one another. The Speaker or the Chairman is thus given the authority to decide which of these shall be put. Naturally he tries to select the more important amendments, and to ensure that the amendments which *are* put, really cover the general desires of the Members. It is a power which might be easily abused and whoever is in the Chair is usually very cautious in the way it is applied. The name Kangaroo does not, of course, appear in any of the Standing Orders of the House. It is the nickname which Members have given to the procedure, as the Speaker or Chairman jumps like a kangaroo from one clause to another.

165—*Shelving the Question*

The second class of motion for closing debate is that which gets rid of the subject without a vote being taken on the main question. It frequently happens that the members introduce motions which it is very undesirable to discuss, or on which it would be inadvisable for the meeting to make a

decision. As an instance of this, some years ago, before the passing of the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act of 1927, at the Trades Union Congress a motion was moved, "That this Congress declares against the principle of industrial action in purely political matters." During the discussion of the motion, it became apparent that it would be exceedingly inadvisable for the Congress to commit itself either for or against such an abstract proposition. Legislation enters so much into the day-to-day affairs of industry that the dividing line between industrial and political matters is not easy to draw. Many felt that such a decision ought to be taken only on a definite concrete issue, where all the factors could be properly measured. Accordingly a method was taken which got rid of the subject without a vote being taken on the contentious motion.

166—*The Previous Question*

A delegate rose and said "I move the previous question." This was duly seconded. The "previous question" is supposed to be a mental query, namely, "Shall we or shall we not vote upon this motion?" which arises in the minds of an audience when *any* motion is submitted to them. Accordingly, the member who thought it undesirable to vote on the industrial action motion, when he said "I move the previous question," really meant to say, "I move that the original motion be *not* put to the vote." Some years ago the writer enquired from the then Clerk of the House of Commons as to the origin of "the previous question." His reply was that the procedure went back as far as the Journals (or Minutes) of the House.

167—*Its Origin*

The first entry was in 1575, and the second on the 25th May, 1604. The second is interesting in that it shows how the question was then put. A Bill was

before the House for the establishing of certain lands called Assert Lands, and had been read the previous day. This Bill was evidently very controversial and the Journal of the House describes the matter in this way :

“ Mr. Speaker :—That there were thirty-two gross Absurdities in the Bill : And wished that such as were not satisfied, should first repair unto him, before the Bill were put to Question. Much Labour to keep the Bill from the Question at that time ; and agreed, at last, that a *Question should be made, Whether the Bill shall presently be put to Question : And, upon Question, resolved in the Affirmative.*

The Question was made upon the Bill ; and the voices being doubtful, the House divided.”

The words we have placed in italics clearly show the object of the previous question.

168—Procedure on the Previous Question

Although “ the previous question ” is a distinct motion, it is for the purposes of debate treated like an ordinary amendment, except that it takes precedence over all others. Once it is moved and seconded it cannot be withdrawn if there is any dissent, and as it raises a *new* issue anyone may speak upon it, including all those who have spoken on the original motion. During the debate it would be practically impossible to prevent members from referring to the *merits* of the original motion, and the Chairman would have the deuce of a job to keep the members to the point. Furthermore, if the debate became protracted, it would be quite in order for someone who had not already spoken on “ the previous question,” to move the adjournment of the meeting. If this was seconded and carried “ the previous question ” would find itself, like the “ original motion,” shelved for the time being. Now all this sounds terribly confusing and it would almost seem that discussion could go on interminably, but really it is not so. The commonsense of the meeting is more often

than not dead against any discussion on "the previous question," and the Chairman puts it to the vote at once without allowing any debate. The standing orders in this, as in other matters, are decisive and should cover the point. Where they do not, the Chairman would be entitled to follow such precedents as had been laid down by his predecessors.

169—Effect when Carried

On the industrial action motion mentioned in paragraph 165 the standing orders precluded discussion, and the Chairman in putting the question announced "The original motion is, 'That this Congress declares against this principle of Industrial Action in purely political matters.' The previous question has been moved, 'That the original motion be *not* now put.' " "The previous question" was carried, the Congress thus declaring that it did not want to vote on the main issue at all. The discussion was thereupon closed without a vote being taken on the question of industrial action on political matters. The effect of carrying a motion for "the previous question" is to shelve the original motion indefinitely, and it is not in order to put the latter forward again at the same meeting. It may, however, be introduced as a new motion at a subsequent meeting. The previous question cannot be moved when an *amendment* is before the meeting, but only when an original motion or a substantive motion is being discussed. It takes precedence over all other amendments.

170—Effect when Lost

We have seen that when "the previous question" is carried, the original motion is shelved indefinitely. What is the effect when the previous question, namely, "That the original motion be *not* now put," is lost?

Clearly, by defeating "the previous question," the meeting has, in effect, said "That the original motion *shall* be *now* put." In other words, the members have said, "Not merely are we determined to have the original motion put to the vote, but it is to be put *now*." Consequently the original motion must be put to the vote immediately without further discussion or amendment of any kind. The effect of "the previous question" is, therefore, to close the debate on the original motion in *any* case. If it is carried the original motion is shelved. If it is lost the original motion is put to the vote at once.

171—Chairman Needs Caution

"The previous question" is, therefore, an even more definite way of closing debate than the motion for the "closure" itself. The mere fact of its being moved, seconded, and *accepted* by the Chairman virtually prevents further discussion on the original motion. It is extremely important that this point should be borne in mind by the Chairman. We have seen much confusion caused by the improper handling of "the previous question." Even experienced Chairmen have been tripped up on more than one occasion on this point. All of them should realise that once they have accepted "the previous question" discussion is virtually finished. It is for them, if they don't think it opportune that the debate should be closed, to refuse to accept "the previous question" unless it appears that it is in conformity with the general desire of the meeting. Remember "the previous question" is a distinct motion, but it cannot itself be amended, nor can it be moved when an amendment is *under discussion*.

172—Previous Question Takes Precedence

We have stated that "the previous question" takes precedence over all amendments. This appears to puzzle some people. They know that "the previous

question" cannot be moved *on* an amendment and it seems to them that if there are amendments down for discussion, these must first be got rid of. How then can it be said that "the previous question" takes precedence over them? The explanation is that the restrictions on "the previous question" apply only when an amendment is actually *under discussion*. This does not mean that it cannot be moved merely because an amendment is on the Agenda or that notice of one has been given verbally. It must be remembered that technically speaking all amendments, like all motions, are assumed to have been given in writing, and that they must be moved in the strict sequence in which they affect the original motion. Now supposing the Agenda contained a number of amendments, none of which had, however, *actually been moved*, and the original motion to which they referred was under discussion. If "the previous question" was moved and seconded, and accepted by the Chairman, it would be taken at once.

173—Not Taken on Amendment

This is the only possible procedure. If every one of the separate amendments had to be moved, seconded and voted upon, the whole purpose of "the previous question" (which is to avoid both discussion *and* decision) would be defeated. Remember that "the previous question" cannot be moved when an amendment is before the meeting, that is to say, when it has actually been moved orally. Thus if an amendment was down on the Agenda, the mover of "the previous question" would have to get in *before* the mover of the amendment had been called upon by the Chairman. If he did so and the mover of the amendment contested the Chairman's acceptance of "the previous question," the Chairman could answer with assurance that "the previous question" takes precedence over all amendments.

174—*Why Not on Amendment ?*

Several times we have been asked why “the previous question” cannot be moved when an amendment is under discussion. It is argued that if the purpose of “the previous question” is to avoid a vote being taken on the issue, this reason applies equally strongly when an amendment is before the meeting. The answer, it seems to us, is that when an amendment has been moved it raises a *separate* and *secondary* issue. At that stage the meeting is only asked to decide a relatively minor question, namely, which of the two—the original motion or the amendment—it will allow to stand for the final vote. The “main question” itself is not actually before the meeting. That at least is the theory, although in practice it is not always easy to keep the two issues clear and distinct during the discussion. But the “main question” is the all-important issue. The quarrel between the amendment and the original motion is a relatively unimportant matter. It should be stressed that the principal purpose of “the previous question” is to prevent a *vote* being taken on the main issue and is not solely to prevent discussion. The historical illustration we have given in paragraph 167 clearly shows this. When the amendment has been disposed of and when once again the motion, in its original or amended form, is before the meeting, or in other words when a *substantive motion* is under consideration, “the previous question” could quite properly then be moved. This procedure, although strictly in order, very seldom occurs in actual practice as usually when the amendments have been disposed of the main question is put to the vote at once.

175—*No Previous Question in Committee*

We have recently read that “the previous question” may be moved in committee. Precedent is dead against this view. Sir Courtenay Ilbert, in his “Manual

of Procedure," says : " The previous question cannot be moved—(1) in any Committee; or (2) on any amendment." Furthermore, the reasons which would justify the moving of this amendment in open meeting do not, generally speaking, apply nearly so strongly in committee.

176—Moving the Next Business

At trade union branch meetings it is seldom that one hears of the "previous question," although it is heard quite frequently at conferences. It is far more usual to move "That the meeting proceeds to the next business." This is a definitely affirmative motion. Like the "previous question," it is treated as an ordinary amendment so far as discussion is concerned, but speeches must be directed to the necessity for proceeding to the "next business," and must not wander on to the original motion. The "next business," unlike the "previous question," may be moved at any time, even when an amendment is under consideration. Should the "next business" be carried, no vote is taken on the main question, and the meeting proceeds to the next item on the Agenda. The undesirable motion is thereby shelved, and cannot again be raised during the meeting. If the "next business" is lost, the discussion on the main issue is resumed.

177—Amending a Rule

An instance was given us of an organisation amending its constitution, where a certain rule was under consideration to which amendments had been moved. It was contended that the carrying of "next business" was unfair, in that it would finish the whole discussion on the rule, and would thus mean that the rule could not be amended. This is undoubtedly true, but the remedy lies with the members themselves. It is they, and they alone, who can determine whether the "next business" shall be carried or not. The

“next business” is not like the “previous question.” The fact that a Chairman may accept such a motion does not close debate; the “next business” must be *carried* to do that. If the “next business” were lost the discussion, as we have said, would be continued.

178—Safeguard Against Misuse

The most reasonable safeguard we can suggest is that the Chairman should be chary about accepting the “next business,” and should never do so if he feels it is an abuse of procedure. If he does accept the “next business” he should call the members’ attention to the amendments which are on the Agenda and point out to them that if the “next business” is carried, these amendments will be wiped out. If, in the light of this explanation, the members persist in supporting the “next business,” it is a clear indication that they do not wish the subject to be discussed. In the case of a revision of rules, the carrying of the “next business” would mean that the rule would remain unaltered.

179—Postponing a Decision

The third method of disposing of a motion is by means of an adjournment. This may be moved for the same reasons as the “next business,” or may be put to allow the members a period of time in which to obtain further particulars about the subject under discussion. The adjournment may be moved for (a) adjourning the debate on a particular subject, or (b) adjourning the meeting as a whole. Either of these motions may be moved at any time, even though an amendment is before the meeting. Where they are moved for the genuine purposes of an adjournment, and not to shelve the question entirely, amendments specifying the date of resumption may be moved to the motion for the adjournment.

180—"Adjournment of House"

In the House of Commons the motion for the adjournment of the House bears rather a different meaning. It is a device which enables a Member, by leave of the House, to raise any matter of urgent public importance. It is hedged round with restrictions, but it is often successfully used to discuss matters which may not otherwise come before an early sitting of Parliament. The actual discussion of the adjournment motion cannot be taken before 7.30 p.m., although leave must be sought from the House immediately after Question Time and certainly before four o'clock. We can best illustrate what happens when application for the adjournment is made by quoting an actual motion moved by Mr. Attlee during the period of the Spanish Civil War on the 23rd June, 1938.

181—Example of Adjournment

Just after Question Time, Mr. Attlee rose and said :

"I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, 'The attacks made yesterday upon British ships and their crews, and the refusal of His Majesty's Government either to afford adequate protection or to take measures to prevent their recurrence.'"

The official report of the House of Commons says :

"The pleasure of the House having been signified, the motion stood over, under Standing Order No. 8, until half-past seven o'clock this evening."

When that time had arrived Mr. Attlee said, "I beg to move, 'That this House do now adjourn.'" He went on to call attention to the bombing attacks made upon British ships engaged in their legitimate trade with Spain, by the aeroplanes assisting the Spanish rebels. The debate continued, Mr. Butler, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, winding up the discussion. The question was then put,

"That this House do now adjourn." The House divided: Ayes, 141; Noes, 275.

182—Adjournment Motions

Outside of the House of Commons, adjournment motions cannot be used to initiate discussions on general policy. Speakers must confine themselves to the merits of an *adjournment*, and nothing extraneous can be introduced. It is out of order to move adjournment motions one upon another. Supposing a motion "That the meeting be adjourned," had been moved, someone who did not desire the *meeting* to end but only the *debate* on a particular motion, might want to move, "That the *debate* be adjourned." This could not be accepted as an amendment, but if the adjournment of the meeting was first defeated, then it would be in order to move the adjournment of the debate, or vice-versa, after a reasonable period had elapsed.

183—Adjourning the Debate

A member desiring the adjournment of debate rises and says: "I move that the debate on this subject be now adjourned." He may please himself whether he specifies the date on which the debate shall be resumed, or may move the adjournment "*sine die*" (which means an indefinite period). "*Sine die*" in the motion gives the impression that it is a side-tracking device, but of course there may be genuine difficulty in stating an exact date or time. Discussion may be allowed on a motion for a genuine adjournment, but where it is merely a stalling device, it should be put without debate. Such speeches as are permitted are usually limited by the standing orders, and one or two speakers only allowed. Nothing approaching a general discussion should be permitted. When speeches are allowed, the mover of the original motion may deal with the arguments advanced for the

adjournment. This does not interfere with his right to reply on the main question. If the adjournment is carried, the meeting proceeds to the next item. If the debate is adjourned to a specified date, a member who has already spoken on the main question cannot speak again when the debate is resumed. Usually, the member who moved the adjournment is allowed the first opportunity of addressing the meeting on the main question when the discussion is resumed.

184—Adjournment of the Meeting

This is usually moved in the form, "That the meeting be now adjourned," although sometimes the motion is worded, "That the Chairman do leave the Chair." There is an important difference between the "adjournment of the meeting" and the "adjournment of the debate." The latter merely *postpones* the debate, whereas the former *supersedes* the main question altogether. On this motion, no debate or speeches of any kind will be allowed if its obvious intention is to shelve the business, and a motion for the adjournment *of the meeting* (which does not mention any date) must be put to the vote immediately it is moved and seconded. If it is moved as a separate motion when there is no other question under discussion, for the genuine purpose of fixing the date of the next meeting, it may, of course, be discussed or amended in the ordinary way. In either case the effect, if the motion is carried, is to dispose of the main question without a vote being taken on it. When the meeting again assembles, the original motion could again be moved, and a new debate be taken on it as the former motion has automatically lapsed. Like the motion for the closure and the next business, neither motion for the adjournment may be moved again until the debate has proceeded for some time. This period is usually fixed by the standing orders.

185—"I Move Progress"

This motion is often used incorrectly. When a debate is becoming wearying and the meeting seems to be getting no farther, some bored member may say, "I move progress." He does this believing that the meeting, if his motion is carried, will go on with the next business. Although he does not realise it he is really moving the adjournment of the meeting. Sir Erskine May, in "Parliamentary Practice," page 455, dealing with Committees of the House of Commons, says :

"It is the practice for members who desire to close the sitting of a committee, to move that the 'chairman do report progress, and ask leave to sit again,' in order to put an end to the proceedings of the committee on that day, this motion, in committee, being analogous to that frequently made at other times, for adjourning the debate."

It is plain from the language used that such a motion is only appropriate to adjourn a committee meeting, and not a meeting of the parent body. To report progress to oneself and to ask oneself for leave to sit again would scarcely seem common sense.

186—*Chairman Do Leave the Chair*

Incidentally, it seems from this that if the member restricted his motion to reporting progress and omitted the words "to ask leave to sit again" he would, in fact, be proposing the winding up of the committee. That this is evidently within the power of the committee itself to determine is apparent from another motion which is sometimes moved in committee, namely, "That the Chairman do now leave the chair." Erskine May says that this supersedes the order appointing the committee and converts it into a *dropped* order, and that no report whatever is made from the committee. In other words the committee has formally buried itself.

187—*Summary of Chapter Seven*

Chairman may close debate, but on important occasions motion is needed. Methods are (a) Taking a vote immediately, (b) Shelving subject, (c) Postponing a decision. Cannot be moved by members who have already spoken, and take precedence over any other business. Gladstone originated modern closure motion "That the question be now put." May be moved at any time, but when moved on amendment applies to it only. Later may be moved on original motion. No discussion allowed. Time-table operates Guillotine, which automatically cuts off debate. Kangaroo means power of Chairman to jump from amendment to amendment, cutting some out in process. Previous question means "That the question be *not* now put." Treated as amendment, takes precedence, and discussion is permissible but unusual. Cannot be moved on an amendment or in committee. If carried main question is shelved. If lost main question must be put to vote immediately. Previous question cannot itself be amended. Once accepted by Chairman it closes debate whatever happens. Cannot be moved in committee. Motion for "next business" also shelves question. Is a distinct motion, not an amendment, and, unlike "previous question," may be moved at any time. May be discussed. If carried no vote taken on main question. If lost discussion proceeds. Motion for adjournment of meeting or of debate moved at any time. Adjournment of meeting supersedes main question, but adjournment of debate merely postpones. Where not used solely to shelve subject, motions for adjournment of meeting or debate may be discussed and amended, otherwise no discussion permissible. Parliament allows mover of adjournment motion to call attention to matters of urgent public importance. Motion "I move progress" really means adjournment of meeting and is generally used only in committee. Motion "That the Chairman do now leave the chair," if carried, dissolves committee.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Paragraphs 188—219

Voting and Elections

Describes: How to put the question, voting by show of hands, voices, as well as card or block voting, and divisions. Also the way to elect committees, Chairmen and officers openly and by ballot; with a few words about delegates and their functions.

188—*Putting the Question*

When the debate on a subject is ended, the Chairman proceeds to take the vote. In the language of debate, this is called "Putting the question" because, in effect, the members are being asked to decide by their votes *the question*: "Are you in favour of this motion?" In large conferences and aggregate meetings it is usually necessary to appoint members to count the votes. These members are called "Tellers." This is done to ensure accuracy and to avoid any suggestion that the organisers of the meeting are not strictly impartial. At ordinary meetings, the Chairman usually does the counting himself with the assistance of the Secretary as an extra precaution.

189—*Voting by Show of Hands*

In putting the question, the Chairman should first read the motion loudly and distinctly to the meeting. Let us assume that a simple motion is presented to which no amendment has been moved. The Chairman would say, "The motion is :

'That this meeting expresses its conviction and faith in the principles and the policy of the Labour Party, and determines to put forth all its resources to secure the return of a Labour Government at the next election.'

All those in favour of this motion please show."

Every member who is in favour should then vote by holding up one hand. These are counted and the number recorded by the Secretary. Then the Chairman says: "All those against the motion please show." The members opposing then vote, and if there are more votes in favour of the motion than against it, the Chairman announces: "The motion is carried." If the majority are against it, he declares it lost.

190—Voting by “Aye” and “No”

Sometimes the vote is taken by voice. In this case the Chairman, after reading the motion, says : “ All those in favour of the motion please say ‘Aye’.” The supporters then shout “Aye.” The Chairman says: “ All those against say ‘No.’ ” The opposers respond. The Chairman then decides as to whether the “ayes” or the “noes” are in the majority. If the “ayes” sounded the louder he says : “ *I think* the ‘ayes’ have it.” He makes a pause and if some member thinks the “noes” were the more numerous, such member has the right to demand a vote by show of hands. The Chairman should be wary and should not be taken in by those who although perhaps in the minority have the stronger lungs.

191—“Noes Sound Louder”

We think this method is good for large conferences in particular. Those present like to exercise their lungs a bit now and again. It enables them to participate a little more animatedly than by merely lifting up one hand. They feel they are engaged in a sort of vocal contest to prove the supremacy of their convictions, and they usually shout out lustily. The Chairman should remember that the sound of “no” carries much better than “aye” and make due allowance for this. If there is any doubt he should take a show of hands forthwith.

192—Divisions

Sometimes a proposition is so acceptable to the members that no voting is necessary. In such an event the Chairman, seeing no opposition to the proposition, and being desirous of avoiding formality in taking a vote, asks : “ Is it agreed that we adopt this motion ? ” The members will then reply in chorus : “ Agreed.” If, however, there is any dissent,

a vote will have to be taken. In Parliamentary language this is called a "division" because the Members are divided in their opinions and the vote is for the purpose of ascertaining which side is in the majority. The House of Commons procedure is that the members walk into what are known as division lobbies, those in favour of the motion going into one lobby and those against it into the other. The number of Members in each lobby is then counted, the names being ticked off as they pass through, and the result is returned to the Speaker. This procedure is restricted almost entirely to Parliament although it is occasionally met with in municipal bodies.

193—L.C.C. Voting

The London County Council employs it on occasion at the discretion of the Chairman. The method used is very similar to that of Parliament. Two tellers representing the respective sides are nominated by the Chairman for the "ayes," and two others for the "noes," a bell is rung, two minutes afterwards the doors of the Council Chamber are locked, and the question is again put. The doors are then opened and the "ayes" go through the lobby on the Chairman's left and the "noes" through that on the right, the vote being taken at the exits, one teller for the "ayes" and one for the "noes" being stationed at each. Usually, however, voting at L.C.C. meetings is by show of hands unless ten or more members demand a division.

194—Card Voting

At delegate meetings and conferences where each delegate is sent to represent a definite number of members, voting is frequently conducted by card. We have referred to this process in Chapter Eleven, paragraphs 320 and 321. It is rather an elaborate

procedure and takes about ten minutes to complete, even with really efficient tellers. Hence it should not be resorted to unless some really big question is under discussion. The standing orders should always state the circumstances in which a card vote can be demanded. Those of the T.U.C. say: "It will only be necessary to resort to this method of voting in divisions that may be challenged by delegates to Congress." If a few delegates only, rose to claim a card vote the Chairman would probably decline the request. The Standing Orders of the Co-operative Congress are much stricter on this point and require 100 delegates to support the demand for a card vote.

195—The Block Vote

Voting by card is frequently described as "block voting" because the delegates cast their votes in blocks as it were. Thus a delegate to the T.U.C. representing 50,000 members would be given a card marked 50. Below is a voting card as issued at a recent Congress.

DELEGATE'S VOTING CARD ANNUAL CONGRESS, BRIDLINGTON SEPT. 4th to 9th, 1939 INSTRUCTIONS This card to be used only when a Card Vote is demanded. It must then be held up by the Delegate so that it may be seen by the Tellers. M.C. 38/18	Number of Votes your Union is entitled to Record 50
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The instructions contained on the back of the card indicate clearly the method of voting. At large conferences there are sometimes as many as a dozen tellers, each of whom takes a separate section of the hall, counting the votes, whether by show of hands or by card, in that section only. The tellers, of course, retain their own right to vote as delegates, but usually they are drawn from organisations having several delegates so that others can use the card in their absence.

196—Instructions to Tellers

These are the sort of instructions which are issued to tellers :

(a) Each teller will be responsible for the votes cast in a section shown on the attached plan, which shows in addition where the teller is seated. (b) Tellers must be in their places during each sitting, but if they leave their places for any reason they must report to the chief teller. (c) The President will call over the names of tellers before a card vote is taken. (d) A badge is provided for tellers, also a numbered scribbling pad. When a card vote is called, each teller will enter on the pad the name or number of the motion or other point at issue. (e) Tellers will then enter on the pad the number of votes cast in the section for which they are responsible and add up the total for this section. (f) When the "for" vote has been taken, the completed slips should be handed to the chief teller at the pre-arranged point near the platform. (g) The tellers will then deal with the "against" votes in the same way. When all the completed slips are handed in, the chief teller will count the total vote and hand the result to the President for announcement to the delegates.

197—Criticisms of Card Vote

Voting by card is criticised sometimes on the ground that it gives a false impression of the strength of the minority and the majority. It is contended that the large organisations swamp the small ones. There is not much in this contention as delegate conferences are usually constituted on a representative basis.

The bigger the membership the bigger the delegation, and as affiliation fees are generally on the basis of so much per member this seems entirely fair. But not all organisations send their full delegation, so that a vote by show of hands may be a quite inaccurate reflex of the membership represented by the voters. It is also argued that no delegation has the right to commit its membership as is done by a card vote. This contention cuts both ways, whether the vote is by card or by show of hands. The delegates are not merely committing themselves but are laying down policy for their members.

198—*Delegates Are Representatives*

Delegate is scarcely the proper description of those sent nowadays to determine policy at large conferences. More and more they are assuming the character of *representatives*, instead of being the bearers of instructions which bind them hand and foot. The rank and file look to them for leadership and guidance. But how can guidance be given if delegates are not free to make up their minds as to which policy they will support, after having heard the merits fully discussed? What is the use of sending a delegation to a conference bound by inflexible instructions from which they cannot in any circumstances depart? It would be useless for any delegate to try to persuade any other delegate to accept his point of view if, in advance, *all* had been told that they must stick to policy already laid down.

199—*Why a Conference ?*

Why, in such circumstances, bother about having a conference at all? Certainly delegates are sent to voice the views of their members, but they must not be placed in a position where their ears are deaf to argument and reason. This is a problem which often

confronts an organisation sending delegates to a conference. They solve it in various ways. Where there is strong and majority opinion among the members of such organisation on an issue, there will be a disposition to bind their delegates by a strict mandate. When, however, opinion is more tentative, although somewhat inclined to a particular view, discretion may be allowed to the delegates to hear the pros and cons of the arguments and, if the evidence does not weigh heavily against their preconceived opinions, to vote in that way. Where the opinion among the members is more fluid or open upon a question, a free hand should be given to the delegates to vote according to the weight of the facts and arguments advanced. In practice what the delegates generally do is to confer among themselves and to vote on the merits of the issue before them. Sometimes where a delegation cannot agree amongst themselves, their votes will be split, and some members of the same delegation will vote for a motion and others against it. Some societies provide for this contingency in advance by insisting upon several voting cards instead of one. Thus, a society with 50,000 votes might require ten cards, each of 5,000 votes.

200—*Members Abstaining from Voting*

It is a common experience at meetings to find members who will not vote either one way or another on the question before the meeting. It must be admitted that it is frequently difficult for a member to make up his mind on some questions, but nevertheless the practice is to be strongly deprecated, as it shows lack of individuality and decision. There is no *compulsion* on a member to vote, but even if a member does not vote he does not escape responsibility. Unless he definitely indicates to the Chairman that he is remaining neutral and not voting, he is held to be in favour of the decision of the majority.

201—*Voting by Roll Call*

Now and again some very vital issue will confront a meeting on which it is absolutely essential to have a record of the votes cast. This is more particularly true of those occasions where a meeting consists of delegates who have been sent with a definite mandate as to how they shall vote. In order to ensure that no mistake shall be made, and that no dubiety shall be in anyone's mind as to how the delegates have voted, the method of the *roll call* or *record* vote is adopted. This was the method followed by the Special Conference of Trade Union Executives in April 1926, when it was decided to institute a national strike in support of the miners who were resisting heavy wage reductions and extension of their working hours. The roll call method is also employed at International Labour Conferences, and at the Conferences of the League of Nations. It is described further in Chapter Eleven.

202—*Mistakes in Voting*

It sometimes occurs that a member unthinkingly casts his vote against a proposition he intended to vote for. Has he any means of rectifying this? Unfortunately, he has not. Once his vote has been given and *counted*, either by ballot or by show of hands, he cannot recall it. In the House of Commons if a member goes into the wrong lobby by mistake, his vote is counted as having been given in that lobby. The Standing Order of the London County Council follows this same practice, but if the member announces his mistake before the result of the division is declared, this fact is recorded in the Minutes. If, however, there is any general mistake, such as a disagreement between the tellers as to the number of votes cast, the Chairman must take the vote over again.

203—*Nem. Con.*

It is frequently unnecessary to take a record of the voting at meetings. Particularly is this true when formal motions are being discussed. It would be waste of time in such cases to attempt to count the votes. It is usually sufficient to record the motions as "Carried by a large majority," or "Defeated by general consent," as the case may be. It is not always safe to suppose, because nobody votes against a motion, that such a motion is carried *unanimously*. For a motion to be carried unanimously everybody present must vote in its favour. It does not mean only that nobody must vote against it. There may be a good many of those members present to whom we have referred in a previous paragraph, who will not vote either for or against. While, as stated, it is literally correct to regard these people as going with the majority, the safest method is to record the motion as carried or lost, whichever the case may be, "nem. dis." or "nem. con." "Nem. dis." is an abbreviation for the Latin *nemine dissentiente* (pronounced ném-in-êe dis-sen-shi-én-tee) meaning without dissent; and "nem. con." = *nemine contradicente* (pronounced nem-in-ee contra-dye-sen-tee) or no one contradicting.

204—*Election of Officers*

Every society needs officers. Not only is there a Chairman and Secretary to be appointed, but perhaps a treasurer, deputy-chairman, assistant secretary and other subordinate officers. A committee may be needed, or a deputation, or something of the kind. The procedure is the same in all cases where a member or a number of members are required to undertake certain duties. It is to the advantage of all concerned that the men best fitted to undertake these shall be appointed. No doubt, so many members are burning with desire to serve the cause, that there is competition amongst them for the post under consideration. All

candidates must be nominated by a member and seconded by another, neither of whom are candidates. Then they must be elected. We shall illustrate the method by dealing with the appointment of a committee.

205—*Appointing a Committee*

The first thing to determine is whether such a body is needed at all. This is done by means of a motion moved and seconded in the usual way. Once that has been settled the next thing is to decide how many members are required. Sometimes a single motion will serve the purpose of both, but where there is any likelihood of a division of opinion, they had better be taken separately. This may seem the longest way, but more often than not it is the shortest. Both of these points having been decided, the next business is to select those who are to serve.

206—*Nominating the Candidates*

We shall suppose that it has been decided to set up a committee of three members to be elected from the meeting. The Chairman would then say, "There are three candidates required ; I am ready to receive nominations." The members present are then free to nominate the candidates they desire. A member nominating a candidate may speak in support of his nominee, but this is sometimes frowned upon as importing a bias into the consideration. Really it is not so, but if every member spoke in favour of his candidate, the discussion might bore the audience to tears. Strictly speaking, a member may propose or second more than one candidate, but where there is no dearth of nominations, the practice should not be encouraged. Such a member might proceed to eulogise each of his nominees !

207—*Closing Nominations*

A member may not nominate an absent member unless he can satisfy the meeting that his nominee will stand. The number of candidates is not restricted to the actual number of places on the committees, but generally, as soon as there seem to be sufficient candidates to afford the meeting a proper choice, some member will move "That nominations be closed." This motion cannot be moved by a candidate, or by a member who has proposed or seconded any of the candidates. The Chairman does this informally, saying: "Is it your wish that nominations be closed?" The members then reply, "Agreed." If the response seems general nominations are closed immediately. No discussion may be permitted on such a formal motion.

208—*Methods of Election*

If the motion "That nominations be closed" is lost, the Chairman allows further nominations until the desire of the meeting appears satisfied, when he himself should close them. He then reads over the names of the candidates. For example, he might say: "There are three members to be elected to the Committee. The candidates nominated are Messrs. Read, Wright, Page, Leaf and Binder. *Five* candidates for *three* positions. You have each three votes. I shall put the names in the order in which they were moved. All those in favour of Mr. Read?" He then counts the hands held up in favour of the candidate, and the Secretary makes a note of the number. Then the next candidate is dealt with similarly. This process is continued until the list has been completed. The three candidates receiving the highest number of votes are then declared elected.

209—*Reading the List*

When the list is a long one, the Chairman should read the names over before taking the vote, and after the

first candidate has been voted upon, should read the names of the remaining candidates. He repeats this process as often as seems necessary, in order to keep the members fully alive as to the names of the candidates on whom a vote is still to be taken. Unless he does this, members will probably discover that they have used all their votes on the first few candidates, and will have forgotten all about those still to be put to the vote.

210—*Putting the Names*

The Chairman may vary the order of putting the names to the vote. Sometimes he selects a name from the top of the list and after putting this, takes one from the bottom, alternately taking one from the top and one from the bottom until the list has been exhausted. As an alternative he may start from the bottom and take the names until he reaches the top candidate. He should always announce to the meeting beforehand the procedure he is going to adopt, and if any objection is taken the names should be put in the order in which they were nominated. The Chairman should be extremely careful about this, as it is on such occasions more than any other that he may be accused, although quite unreasonably, of not being strictly impartial.

211—*Process of Elimination*

There is another method, which is in effect voting by the process of elimination. This is called the Exhaustive Vote. The election is taken in rounds, and with five candidates each member in the room would have four votes on the first round. He would cast these four votes for the four candidates whom he desired to be elected out of the five nominated. The candidate securing the lowest number of votes on the first round would drop out, leaving four candidates only for the three positions. The next round the

members would have three votes, there being four candidates only. Again the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes in the second round would drop out. No further rounds would be necessary, and the remaining three candidates would be declared elected. This is a tedious process, however, and although absolutely the fairest method, is sometimes too lengthy to be used. The methods we have described apply also to the election of members of deputations, delegations, and to any other kind of office.

212—*Nomination of Chairman*

We have shown how a temporary Chairman can be appointed. The system is exactly similar where a Chairman is needed for regular meetings. His term of office may be three, six, or twelve months as may be prescribed by the rules of the society. The only difference is that the retiring Chairman conducts the election of his successor. He should start by declaring that the office is vacant and then state briefly the Chairman's duties, as laid down by the rules. We don't mean by this that he must go into any technical explanation as to how the Chairman should maintain order and put motions or anything of that kind. But merely that the Chairman is needed to preside over the meetings for the next twelve months, and that he would be required to attend committee meetings or whatever other incidental duties may devolve upon him. The retiring Chairman then asks for nominations and when names are put forward, discussion may be allowed on the merits of the respective candidates, but as we have stated in a previous paragraph, this is not always desirable. He would then read over the names of those proposed and announce that every member has one vote only.

213—*Second Vote if Necessary*

He would then put the names to the vote separately and members would vote for the candidates they felt most suitable. The exhaustive vote could be used if the meeting so desired, but as has been explained, this is an unusual procedure. If, however, there were several candidates and no one of them had a clear majority over the rest, the names of the top two candidates should be submitted to a second vote. The one who received the highest number of votes finally would then be declared elected. To obtain a clear majority the successful candidate must receive more than one-half of the total votes cast. The retiring Chairman would then suitably congratulate his successor who, in his turn, would reciprocate by expressing the thanks of the members to the retiring Chairman for his devoted service during his term of office. (It is desirable to keep on hand a list of suitable adjectives and encomiums for such occasions.) The retiring Chairman would then blush, stammer a few appropriate words, struggle with his emotions, and take his seat. The new Chairman would probably appreciate the unobtrusive guidance of his predecessor during the early stages of his duties, and should reserve a place for him on the Chairman's immediate right hand. The election of Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officers, follows exactly the same procedure, the new Chairman, of course, conducting the election.

214—*Elections by Ballot*

The foregoing refer to elections other than those taken by ballot. Where a ballot is prescribed the names of the candidates (together with a few relevant particulars) should be entered on the ballot paper in alphabetical order. The alphabetical method ensures that no one will accuse the officials of giving any candidate a better position on the ballot paper than

another. It may seem odd that there can be such a thing as a better position, but some people believe this. In all cases where a ballot vote is taken it is essential that two or more members should be appointed by the meeting to supervise or scrutinise the taking and counting of the votes. These members are called *scrutineers*, and their appointment is intended to guarantee absolute impartiality. Naturally they could not be candidates themselves, nor should they, as far as can be ascertained, be partial to any particular candidate. Now and again the practice can be waived by consent of the meeting and the Chairman and Secretary, or other officials, can be authorised by those present to act as scrutineers.

215—*Scrutineers Should Supervise*

Where there is the least possibility of high feeling being aroused by the results, it is always advisable that the scrutineers should be appointed by the meeting. The Chairman and officers generally should never be placed in a position where their fairness and integrity can be questioned. In the rules of certain unions it is made a condition that the Chairman should scrutinise ballot papers and sign the scrutineers' sheets in addition to the scrutineers. The practice depends entirely upon the rules and customs of the society concerned. There is nothing in the duties of Chairmanship, as such, which requires a Chairman to scrutinise ballot papers.

216—*Specimen Ballot Paper*

In order to give an idea of what a ballot paper looks like, we give extracts from one used at the Labour Party Conference at Southport in 1939. The Executive Committee of the Party is composed of four divisions :

1. Trade Unions.
2. Socialist and Co-operative and Professional organisations.
3. Constituency, and Central Labour Parties and Federations of Constituency Parties.
4. Women members.

A different coloured ballot paper is used for each section. Incidentally the colours used at Southport were (some would say *appropriately*) blue for the Trade Unions and pink for the Constituency Parties.

217—*Basis of Voting*

Organisations in each section are entitled to one vote per thousand members. Thus a society with 7,000 members would have 7 votes. This number is printed on line 4 of the ballot paper. As there are 5 candidates to be elected a society would be entitled to mark 7, opposite the name of each of the 5 candidates they wished to be elected. The total number of votes would, therefore, be 35 as shown at the bottom of the ballot paper.

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DIVISION IV.—WOMEN MEMBERS

Officials marking Ballot Papers are requested to note :—

- (1) There are **5** members to be elected in this Section.
- (2) Crosses (**X**) must not be used.
- (3) Figures only should be inserted.
- (4) No Candidate must receive more than **7** votes.
- (5) The total number of votes recorded must not exceed the total number indicated at the foot of the Ballot Paper.

No.	CANDIDATES.	Actual Number of Votes
1	ADAMSON, MRS. JENNIE L. (Lewisham Central Labour Party and T.C.)	
2	AULD, MRS. MARY (Cathcart Divisional Labour Party).	
3	GOULD, MRS. BARBARA AYRTON (Wednesbury Divisional Labour Party).	
4	LAWRENCE, MISS A. SUSAN (London Labour Party).	
5	NOEL-BUXTON, LADY LUCY (Norwich Labour Party & Industrial Council).	
6	STEWART, MISS ELEANOR (Transport and General Workers' Union).	
7	WILKINSON, MISS ELLEN (Nat. Union of Distributive & Allied Workers).	
TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES ...		
MUST NOT EXCEED 		35

The ballot papers are marked by the delegate, folded and placed in ballot box. At smaller meetings they may be handed folded to the scrutineers.

218—*Blackballing*

There is yet another method of voting, where a straight vote for or against a proposition is required, such as in the election of a candidate for membership of a club. Every member is given two small marbles, one white and the other black. A closed box, with a hole cut in it big enough to insert the marble, is then brought round by the scrutineers. Those who vote *for* the proposition insert the *white* marble, while those who vote against place the *black* one in the box. The marbles are then counted by the scrutineers and the result declared. The unused balls which have been retained by the members, are then collected in a bag by the scrutineers. This method is virtually a ballot vote, as it is quite secret. It is somewhat cumbersome where the election of candidates is concerned, as it necessitates a separate ballot for each. The process of voting against a proposition by this method is known as "blackballing." This method of voting by balls is the oldest form of ballot known, and was used by the Greeks and the Romans.

219—*Summary of Chapter Eight*

When debate ended Chairman puts the question. Vote counted by tellers at big meetings. Otherwise Chairman and Secretary do this. Usual method show of hands. Voting by "aye" and "no" sometimes preferred. If issue in doubt show of hands necessary. In Parliament members divide into lobbies. Card or block voting used at conferences. Block votes criticised, but as fair as other systems. Conference delegates vote on merit. Members abstaining regarded as with majority unless they dissent. On vital issues roll-call vote taken. If member makes mistake in voting, cannot rectify this if vote already counted, but if mistake is general vote may be taken again. Nem. con. means carried without a count, and not carried unanimously. Nem. dis. means no one dissenting. In

appointing Committee first decide principle and then fix numbers. Candidates must be moved and seconded. Nomination by individual members of more than one candidate and speeches in support are permissible but undesirable. Absent candidate nominated only if willing to stand. Chairman by consent may close nominations. Otherwise motion "That nominations be closed" necessary and put without discussion. Chairman reads names and puts to vote. Order of putting names rests with the Chairman. Methods: (1) every member given same number of votes as positions to be filled; (2) Voting by rounds, eliminating one candidate every round. This slow but surest procedure. If method (1) is used and highest candidate has a clear majority over rest, top two candidates must be voted on again. Election of new Chairman conducted by predecessor. On ballot votes names put in alphabetical order. Scrutineers supervise ballot. Blackballing is as secret as ballot.

CHAPTER NINE

Paragraphs 220—242

In Committee

Discusses committee procedure and advises informality wherever possible. Deals with standing committees, special and joint committees, and gives a few wrinkles on how to get on with the business.

220—What is a Committee ?

A committee is a body to whom any business has been committed or referred. There are three principal kinds of committees : (1) regular or standing committees ; (2) special committees, and (3) joint committees. Sometimes the Latin phrase "Ad Hoc" meaning "on purpose" is used to describe a special committee, Parliament calls them "Select" committees. Standing committees are those which have a permanent existence and which are formed under the constitutions or rules of the society. In the House of Commons they have five such committees—A, B, C, D and E, which consider bills and other matters referred to them. In addition to these, there are Standing Committees on Public Accounts, Privileges, Public Petitions, Estimates, Publications, and last but not least important—Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms. On important occasions the Commons turns itself by a resolution into a Committee of the whole House to consider Bills. The Speaker leaves the Chair, the Mace is removed from the table, and the Chairman of Ways and Means presides.

221—Standing Committees

Practically all large societies and public bodies have their lists of administrative or standing committees, whose purpose is to carry on the detailed work of administration, and thus save the time and labour of a general body of members. Most municipalities have their committees on finance and general purposes, parks, electricity, education, health, housing and police, etc. The latter, by the way, is always called the Watch Committee, a relic of the ancient days before the Police Act when a body of citizens, called the Night Watch, patrolled the streets to keep order. Most large co-operative societies, trade unions and friendly societies have their lists of standing committees which are too numerous to mention here.

222—*Joint Committees*

A joint committee is one which is established between two bodies for dealing with a similar problem, and is usually composed of an equal number of members from each, the Chair being taken at alternate meetings by a representative from each side. Thus, the House of Commons has a joint committee upon which both it and the House of Lords is represented. The Trades Union Congress has its joint committees with the Labour Party, the British Medical Association, and numerous other bodies on a variety of subjects. The Co-operative Union has its joint committees with the Co-operative Wholesale Society, covering propaganda and trade, and its Parliamentary Committee, representing the Co-operative Union, the C.W.S., the Productive Federation, the Managers' Association, the Secretaries' Association and the Co-operative Party, besides many joint committees dealing with co-operative trade. A joint committee may have a permanent status when it would be called a joint standing committee, or it may be appointed for a particular purpose only, when it would be a special joint committee.

223—*Committee Functions*

The functions of standing committees may either be executive or advisory. If they are executive it means that the committee has the job of administering the day-to-day affairs of the parent body. If they are advisory or consultative, it merely means it proffers guidance which may or may not be acted upon by the parent body. Its members are appointed for a definite period, whereas membership of a special committee lapses when the job is finished. A special committee is usually advisory in the sense that its task is to consider certain subjects only, and to report its conclusions on them as soon as it has completed its deliberations.

224—General Procedure

The methods of dealing with business in a committee will vary to some extent with the nature of its duties. But in general the practice followed is similar to that in ordinary meetings. There are certain differences, however, these being (1) general discussion usually precedes the moving of a motion, (2) motions need not be seconded, (3) members may speak as often as they can catch the Chairman's eye, (4) the previous question cannot be moved, (5) a member may remain seated when speaking. Where the committees are reasonably small the Chairman should not insist too hurriedly upon a motion being moved. He will find it much more expeditious if he, himself, tries to gauge the general feeling of the members as expressed by them, and to sum this up into a decision. If, of course, he finds that what he assumed was a general view is not that of all the members, he should then ask for a motion to be moved, when the matter would be decided in the normal way of debate.

225—Speeches in Committee

With regard to (5), this is responsible for a good deal of cross-talking. When a member remains seated while speaking it is sometimes difficult to know when he has finished. He may pause to collect his thoughts, and some other member may immediately begin to speak under the impression that the first speaker has concluded. Even when a speaker has finished, it is quite common for several others to butt in without getting up. We consider the simplest method is for the Chairman to insist on speakers rising to address the Chair.

226—Signal the Chairman

Most people prefer to sit while speaking in committee, and it is easy to get over the difficulty in another way. All that a member has to do, is to raise his hand

whilst the discussion is proceeding, and so indicate to the Chairman that he wishes to speak next. Then the Chairman puts his name down on a list of speakers. If other names are already down, the Chairman can signal as to how many speakers will come before the applicant. Then when the speaker, who has been in possession of the floor has finished, the Chairman can read out the names of those who wish to speak and the order in which they will come.

227—*Cross Talk*

Of course, this is a procedure for sustained remarks. Often enough it will happen that somebody wishes to interject a remark in the course of discussion, and in committee it is often very helpful to do so. It would be foolish to try to conduct the proceedings of a small committee on too formal lines. It would destroy the spontaneity of the discussion, and whilst it might improve the quality of the speeches, it would quite possibly make the proceedings drag out unnecessarily. So much depends upon the size of the committee. If it is a big one the procedure is bound to be rather formal. If it is a small body or a tiny sub-committee of three members or so, the less the formality the greater the probability that the proceedings will be expeditious, and business-like decisions will be made.

228—*Committee Quorum*

The number to form a quorum is usually fixed when a committee is appointed and may vary from a third to a majority of the committee. Parliamentary practice doesn't seem much of a guide on this. If by chance the House omits to fix a quorum when a committee is appointed, *all* the members must attend before business can be done. But in other instances, the quorum seems very small. The Committee of

Public Accounts requires no more than five of its fifteen members for a quorum. The Committee of Selection, which has quite important functions on Private Bills, stipulates three out of eleven members. The Select Committee on Estimates has twenty-eight members, seven of whom form a quorum. In our view, unless the functions of the committee are comparatively unimportant, only in exceptional cases should the quorum be less than a bare majority of the committee.

229—*Ex-Officio Members*

The Chairman and Secretary do not form part of the committee for the purpose of counting a quorum, unless of course, they are elected members with the power to vote. Usually they are ex-officio, that is, members by virtue of their office in the appointing society. Ex-officio members have a right to express their views but very seldom possess voting powers. Unless it is expressly stated by rule or resolution, that the Chairman and Secretary are full members of the committee with voting rights, they would have no right to vote. Frequently, however, a committee is formed entirely of lay members who appoint the Chairman and Secretary from themselves when, of course, they will have the ordinary voting rights of other members.

230—*Functions of Special Committees*

It frequently occurs that when a subject comes before the members, it is found to be of so complicated or difficult a character that it would be impossible for a large meeting to deal with it satisfactorily. The usual course then adopted is to set up a special committee to which the subject is referred. The duties of this committee should be clearly defined, so that its members may know what is expected of them. Usually,

the motion which sets up the committee is fairly broad in its terms. Suppose a trade union branch was considering the question of apprenticeship, and that it seemed desirable it should be examined in detail by a committee. A member would move :

“ That this branch sets up a special committee to propose a scheme dealing with the whole question of apprenticeship conditions, and that it submits a report to the branch as soon as possible.”

The motion is then seconded, discussed, put to the vote, and carried, or amended in any way the branch may think fit. The motion defines the duties of the committee and so constitutes its “ terms of reference,” to use the customary phrase.

231—*Nominating and Electing Committee*

When it has been decided to form a special committee, the meeting should at once fix the number of members by means of a motion in the ordinary way. The number will vary according to the business to be transacted, and it is entirely a matter for the meeting to say as to how many shall form the committee. Having decided the number, the Chairman then proceeds with the nomination and election of the members. This is done in the manner described in paragraphs 206–213. Sometimes a committee is given power to add other persons to its numbers. Such persons may be members of the organisation, or others brought in because of their expert knowledge of the questions to come before the committee. These are referred to as “ co-opted members ” and their functions are confined to giving the committee the benefit of their advice. They should never be allowed to vote, particularly when any question of policy is under consideration, unless express authority has been conveyed by the meeting which appointed the committee.

232—Procedure—Standing Committees

Standing committees have their Minutes and records of proceedings and their first job is to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting. If these have been sent out to each member they need not be read over at the commencement of the following meeting. The Chairman usually says: "As the minutes have been circulated, is it your desire that they be accepted as a correct record?" The members then respond with "Agreed," or if there is any question as to accuracy, this is immediately gone into. Every standing committee needs its Agenda and in established bodies it is the practice for the Agenda to be sent out to the members with the circular convening the committee meeting. If this has not been done and if copies are not available for all members, the Chairman should read over the Agenda. The business is then proceeded with in much the same way as at ordinary general meetings of members, subject to the exceptions which we have mentioned in Paragraph 224.

233—Deliberations of Special Committee

The Agenda of a special committee consists of its "terms of reference," and it is usually found advisable to divide the subject into sections and to consider each separately. Where important subjects are to be considered, the Chairman should take care that the committee does not travel outside its "remit," or terms of reference. Thus, on the apprenticeship question, it would probably be found convenient to divide the subject into (a) wages, (b) training, (c) limitation of numbers, and so on. There is, of course, no restriction on the number of times a member may speak, and it is usually advisable that a general discussion be permitted on the point under consideration, until the members have had some opportunity of forming an opinion. When the discussion has proceeded to this extent, the Chairman should sum up the sense of the meeting and try to secure a decision,

234—*Clearing the Issue*

Alternatively, a motion could be moved by someone who agrees with the Chairman's summing up. He would say in all probability: "I move accordingly," meaning "I move what you have just said." In either case the result would be to centralise discussion on the point at issue, and so conduce to a clear conclusion being reached. Such a motion is, of course, open to amendment in the ordinary way. When passed, it becomes a resolution of the committee. The other aspects are then treated in the same way and the resolutions which have been passed, would then form the basis upon which the report itself could be drafted.

235—*Drafting a Report*

Another method is for the Secretary to take note of the points on which agreement seems likely, and then some member with a special facility for drafting might be appointed by the committee, to rough something out. But the more usual method is for the Chairman and Secretary to prepare a draft report and submit it to the other members for consideration. This report should embody that which appears to these officers to be the general opinion of the committee on the subject. Any member is at liberty to draft a report himself, independently of what the Chairman and Secretary may do, and this may be submitted to the committee for its approval. A draft report should be arranged in paragraphs, each of which should be numbered for purposes of reference. Where the deliberations of the committee cover a lengthy period, it is usual to issue a preliminary report called an "interim report," giving the progress of the committee up-to-date.

236—*Deciding Between Rival Draft Reports*

Supposing, in the case of the committee which we have seen elected in paragraph 208, that one report had been prepared by the Chairman and the second by Mr. Read, the first duty of the Chairman is to have both these reports read, separately and in full, to the committee. A record of their having been read should be entered into the Minutes, after which the committee must decide as to which of the two it prefers. Frequently a compromise may be arranged, and the reports dovetailed into one another to form one comprehensive report. Otherwise, they must be treated as rivals, and a motion may be moved :

“That the report of the Chairman and Secretary be read a second time.”

This motion is worded in the very formal way which is used in the House of Commons, and means in effect that the report referred to shall be the one to stand for further consideration by the committee. Mr. Read or one of his friends would probably move an amendment to delete the words “Chairman and Secretary” from the motion, and insert the words “Mr. Read.” Discussion, of course, may be allowed on the motion or amendment, after which the vote is taken. The report which is rejected then disappears from consideration.

237—*Considering Draft Report in Detail*

The successful draft report is then considered in detail. Each paragraph is taken separately. The Chairman usually submits a motion :

“That paragraph one form part of the report.”

This motion is voted on, and repeated on the remaining paragraphs, the number, of course, being altered in each case. The motion is open to amendment, and is finally put as a substantive motion in its original or amended form, and a correct record of the voting is

taken. This process is repeated until the whole of the paragraphs have been gone through. New paragraphs may be added to the report, as the reading proceeds, by means of addenda, which must be moved in such order that the sequence of the report itself is preserved.

238—Avoiding Formality

Unless the committee is very large this formality can be short-circuited by members making *suggestions* instead of presenting cut and dried motions. If there are very contentious matters under consideration, however, it is scarcely possible to avoid the formal method.

Finally, the Chairman puts a motion :

“That this draft report (or the report as amended if any amendments have been made) be adopted as the report of this committee.”

After this motion has been carried, the report is signed by the Chairman, and is then ready for presentation to the full meeting of the members.

239—Minority Report

Even after the report has been carried, by a majority vote, some members may feel that they cannot conscientiously sign it. It is open for them in such a circumstance to write a minority report, or to attach a note to the main report, explaining the differences between their views and the general conclusions of the committee. On Royal Commissions, whose members may be drawn from diverse sections of the community, this practice is frequently resorted to. Where, however, a committee is appointed by a branch of a society, minority reports ought not to be resorted to except in very extreme circumstances. Nor is it usual to require all members to *sign* the report.

240—*Dissolving Special Committee*

If at any time it appears to members of a committee that they are not likely satisfactorily to accomplish the business referred to them, the sittings of the committee may be suspended by a motion moved by such members :

“ That the Committee report progress.”

If this motion is carried, the business is discontinued, and the Chairman reports to the appointing body, the result of the work up-to-date. The Chairman then asks permission from the body for the committee to sit again. If this is given, the committee resumes its meetings. We have referred to this in greater detail in paragraphs 185 and 186, where the closure is described. There is another motion which, if accepted, virtually dissolves the committee, namely :

“ That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.”

If this is carried it means that the committee cannot sit again until it has received instructions from the general body.

241—*Standing Committees*

We have already stated that standing committees are bodies which have a permanent existence. Executive and management committees must necessarily be vested with some measure of executive power. That is to say, they are administrators, who are appointed to interpret and carry out the work of the union in accordance with the rules. They meet periodically, and the result of their deliberations is binding on the branches under their jurisdiction, subject in most cases to appeal. The rules regarding a quorum must be rigidly observed and there must always be a majority of the *elected* committee present. Thus in a committee of ten members, it would be necessary to have at least six elected members present in addition to the Chairman and Secretary, before the meeting could be opened.

But most other standing committees are only able to make *recommendations*, and these should never be acted upon (except in cases of emergency) until they have been presented to and confirmed by the appointing body.

242—*Summary of Chapter Nine*

Three types of committee: (1) standing, (2) special, (3) joint. Functions of standing committees may be either executive or advisory. Special and joint committees nearly always advisory. General procedure follows practice at ordinary meetings with few exceptions: (1) general discussion usually allowed before motion, (2) no seconder is required, (3) no restriction on speeches, (4) previous question cannot be moved, and (5) members may remain seated whilst speaking. Sitting causes cross talk, and Chairman sometimes doesn't know who to call on next. Best to stand whilst speaking or alternatively to signal Chairman of desire to speak. Quorum varies greatly and ex-officio members not counted. Majority is desirable. Special committees have only certain questions referred for consideration and report. Motion appointing constitutes terms of reference and Chairman should keep committee to them. Where possible formality should be avoided and Chairman usually sums up sense of meeting. Report may be drafted (1) from resolutions and suggestions, (2) from draft prepared by Chairman and Secretary or members specially appointed. Where two or more reports, committee must decide which it prefers. Motion "That report be read a second time." Every paragraph numbered and considered a separate motion and may be amended. Members who can't agree with majority may draft minority report. Special committee suspended by motion "To report progress." Motion "That the Chairman do now leave the chair," dissolves the committee and no report is submitted. Executive and Management Committees have executive power. Other standing committees only able to make recommendations which are not operative until confirmed.

CHAPTER TEN

Paragraphs 243—268

Reports, Delegations and Balance Sheets

Describes how reports are treated when they come before the body to which the committee is responsible. Warns members to keep off details until principles have been decided but leaves room for critical faculty to be exercised on both. Separates reports of administrative or standing committees and special committees ; distinguishes between reports under immediate control and those rather more remote ; disposes of deputations, delegations and balance sheets, and keeps auditors in their proper place.

243—*Report Considered by Members*

We have now to consider the procedure when the report of a special committee comes before the branch or general body of members. In considering the report, three points are involved: (1) actual reading or presentation of the report, (2) consideration of the *general policy* of the report, and (3) its detailed construction. As soon as the report has been read, a note to that effect should be inserted in the minutes. Generally the Chairman of the committee which drafted the report presents it, and is ready to answer any questions or criticism concerning it. This may be done without any formal motion being moved.

244—*Discussing the General Principles*

It is next necessary to ascertain whether the general *policy* of the report is approved of by the members, because it is no use discussing the *details* of the report until the general principles have been accepted. To do this, a motion would be moved by the Chairman, and if we are to use parliamentary language, its wording would be: "That the Report be read a second time." This is the same wording that we used in paragraph 236 when dealing with the report when it first came before the *committee*. It means in effect that the members, whilst not binding themselves to accept the *details* of the report, believe that its *general policy* is satisfactory. Sometimes the motion is worded: "That the Report be received." The wording of both these motions is somewhat ambiguous, and it would be much clearer to move: "That the *general policy* of the Report be accepted." This, at least, makes the intention of the mover perfectly plain, even to the uninitiated.

245—*Minority v. Majority*

If a minority report has been drafted, the member or members concerned may move an amendment "To insert the word 'minority' before 'Report be read'." This would make the motion read: "That the *Minority* Report be read a second time." If this is carried the minority report will then be the report before the meeting. If there is no minority report, and all seems plain sailing, sometimes a general discussion may be allowed without any formal motion at all, it being presumed that the Chairman in presenting the report is in fact moving its acceptance.

246—*Approving the General Policy*

This motion furnishes the opportunity of discussing the general nature of the report, and while clauses may be referred to in order to support a general contention, either for or against the acceptance of the report, it is not in order at this stage to discuss the *details* of such clauses. It would not be in order to move, "That the report be rejected." That would give the mover of such a motion the right of reply, and the motion, "That the general policy of the report be accepted" must take precedence. Hence the moving of the rejection could only figure as an amendment, and as this would be a direct negative to the motion it would be out of order.

247—*Moving Rejection*

Those who desire the rejection are thus confined to speaking and voting against the report. If their advocacy results in the motion for acceptance of the report being defeated, the report is finished with and no time need be spent in discussing detailed amendments. The report may be amended in three ways: (1) by referring it back to the committee for recon-

sideration, (2) by postponing consideration to a future date, or (3) by taking the report out of the hands of the existing committee and referring the subject to a new one. Where it is desired to alter the policy, the motion referring the report back may also indicate the general principles the meeting desires to have embodied in the report. When the motion approving the policy has been carried, the general principles are no longer under discussion, and the details alone remain to be considered.

248—Detailed Criticism

The report may then be taken paragraph by paragraph. Each paragraph is treated as an ordinary motion, and should be moved by a member (preferably by the Chairman of the committee). The member moving the paragraph simply says: "I move that paragraph one be approved." He should read the paragraph in order that it may be perfectly fresh in the minds of the members. Amendments may then be allowed to modify or refer back the paragraph under consideration. If there had been a minority report the authors of this would no doubt seek to move detailed amendments in line with their own report. Care should be taken by the Chairman to see that such amendments do not destroy the general principles of the report, as any amendment of this sort would be entirely out of order. Sometimes there will be no discussion on the paragraph and the Chairman should ask, "Is it agreed that this paragraph be approved?" The members who approve say "Agreed," and, if this seems a general response, the Chairman says, "I declare that the paragraph is approved." If there appears to be any dissent, a vote should be taken. The next paragraph is dealt with in a similar manner. This process is repeated until each and every one of the paragraphs has been gone through and passed by the meeting.

249—*Giving Effect to the Report*

The Chairman then formally puts the motion "That the report be approved." This does not require to be moved by members of the audience. If amendments have been carried, the Chairman puts the question, "That the report in its *amended form* be approved." The final motion for the approval may not be discussed or amended. It must be accepted or rejected in its entirety. Having approved the motion, the meeting should then prepare to pass the necessary resolutions to give effect to the report. Needless to say, the report cannot be acted upon until it has been approved.

250—*Reports of Standing Committees*

We have dealt so far with the reports of *temporary committees*, set up for a *special object* only, and whose reports have not been circulated to every member, but have been read over to the meeting. We have still to consider the reports of standing and administrative committees which transact the ordinary routine business. Here, the proceedings are usually conducted in a much more informal manner. The report of an administrative committee is virtually a record of work it has carried out, and its decisions, once they have been given, cannot be altered, except by the body exercising sole control over the committee. Hence the first question to be decided is that of responsibility.

251—*The Controlling Body*

The Chairman of the branch, when in doubt as to how to deal with a report, should ask himself, "Who appointed this committee, and to whom is it responsible? Is its report solely a matter for us, or has it been sent to other bodies to consider? Have we the power to alter or amend this report just as we, and we

alone, think fit, or have we to carry out the terms of the report until such time as we can induce the committee to adopt some other course?" The method of handling the report will depend on the answers to these questions. If the committee is under the control of one branch only, the members of that branch should treat its report in a somewhat similar manner to the report of a special committee—not quite the same, as we shall see later. Let us take as an illustration the reports of the Trades Union Congress General Council.

252—General Council Reports

The General Council is appointed to carry on the executive work of the Congress during the periods between one annual Congress and the next. Now, as to the question of responsibility. To whom is the General Council responsible? Clearly, it cannot be responsible to any single *union* for its actions, but to the unions as a whole. Its resolutions cannot be altered, or its policy changed by any individual union, but only by the Congress representing the whole of the unions. Consequently, its decisions must be acted upon until such time as the Congress has instructed the General Council otherwise. Let us always bear in mind that we are now looking at the matter from the standpoint of the *entire Congress*, to whom the General Council is solely and wholly responsible. The objects of submitting a report to the Congress are (1) to give a record of work done, and (2) to ascertain whether the delegates approve of that work.

253—Dealing with Report

We have described in Chapter Eleven how the report is dealt with and it will suffice here to say that each paragraph is moved by the Chairman; questions asked are answered by a General Council member,

and amendments to refer back the paragraph, when seconded, are replied to from the platform and voted upon. Reference back may contain an instruction on details, and if carried the paragraph is regarded as amended. Sometimes, where policy is involved, several paragraphs may be affected, and they are moved, discussed and voted upon as a section. When the last paragraph has been concluded the Chairman puts a motion, "That the report, (as amended) as a whole be adopted."

254—*Administrative Sub-Committees*

Most societies have a committee or sub-committee which performs functions of administration, and which occupies a similar relation to its parent body as the General Council does to the Trades Union Congress. The authority of these committees is usually limited, and the final word rests with the parent bodies. Thus, a branch committee must report its work to the full branch, a sub-district committee to the full district committee and a sub-executive committee to the full executive council. They all stand in the same category and the same principle is common to all. The minutes of these committees always go before the controlling body for approval, and are treated in the form of a report. Of course, this does not preclude the resolutions of the sub-committee being given effect to in the meantime in cases of urgency, but the parent body has always the power even then of vetoing any action which has been taken. Generally, however, the powers of the committees are set out clearly in the rules.

255—*Reports of Executive Committees*

Take a union which has an executive sub-committee. The minutes of the executive sub-committee are virtually a *report* to the full executive council. Sometimes the sub-committee will not feel it is within its

power to deal with certain subjects, and will refer these to the full executive council. As soon as the item is reached the Chairman of the executive council calls on the Chairman of the committee or sub-committee. The latter says, "I move that the report be endorsed." If there is anything of special note he calls attention to it in its due order. Then the report is seconded (although this is not imperative in committee) and the report is then gone through page by page or paragraph by paragraph, the members of the executive council asking whatever questions they desire. The method of treating the report of the executive sub-committee is very similar to that of the T.U.C. General Council, as stated in a previous paragraph. There is a slight variation, however, although this is more a matter of expediency than procedure. Most amendments to the General Council reports are references back to the Council with perhaps a recommendation.

256—*Matters Arising*

On the executive sub-committee reports, however, an item may occur on which a member of the full executive council thinks action should be taken at once, and usually he moves a motion straightway, instructing such action to be taken. This is taken as a motion, and dealt with in the ordinary way. It may be argued that this course is not strictly accurate, but we have not yet seen any complications arise from it in actual experience. Such a motion would, of course, be open to amendment. Finally, when the minutes have been examined, and the matters arising on the various points have been dealt with, the Chairman puts the motion, "That the Executive Sub-Committee report (or minutes) be adopted." If any item in the executive sub-committee's report has been referred by it to the full executive council for consideration, the Chairman should not allow any dis-

cussion on this item when it is reached during the scrutiny of the report, but should leave this entirely, until the item is reached on the Agenda itself. The final motion should read, "That the Executive Sub-Committee's report be adopted, with the *exception of those items otherwise dealt with on the Agenda.*" If the report has been amended in any way, the motion is worded accordingly. This final motion is quite a formal one, and it is within the power of the Chairman himself to move same.

257—Branch Committee Reports

In the case of a branch committee, the minutes are not circulated to the members of the branch, but are read over to the meeting. Usually they are not dealt with paragraph by paragraph, but the full report is read and members jot down the points on which they require information, or to which they take exception. When the report has been read general discussion ensues. They are then at liberty to deal with it in a similar manner to that described in the previous paragraph.

258—Executive Reports

Up to now we have viewed the subject as though we were members of the controlling body, but there is still another phase of the question to consider. Whilst a branch report is certainly under the sole control of the branch, the report of a district committee or executive council is in quite a different category. Just as the General Council of the T.U.C., whilst being responsible to Congress as a whole, is not responsible to any single union, so an executive council or district committee is not responsible to any single branch, but to the union or district as a whole. We have, therefore, to consider the procedure which must be adopted when the report of an executive body comes before

any of its constituent branches or committees. What is the method to be applied by a constituent branch when considering the report of the national executive?

259—*Reports of Executive and District Committees*

When reports of such administrative bodies come before the branch, they should first be read over and afterwards be minuted as having been read. The Chairman then asks, "Is there anything arising from the report?" If any of the members take exception to the manner in which some of the *items* in the report have been dealt with by the administrative body, for example an executive council, they may move a motion protesting to the executive against the policy contained in the report, and ask the latter to reconsider its decision. In the absence of any such motion, the executive would be justified in assuming that the branch completely approved of the policy of the report.

260—*When to Act on Executive Decisions*

The branch cannot reject the report bodily, nor can they amend it. Further, the executive or district committee, as the case may be, is at liberty to act on its own resolutions as soon as these have been passed. In contentious cases, however, it may be advisable for the executive to wait until it ascertains whether the branches generally approve of the policy of the resolutions passed. It is not usually necessary to read such reports clause by clause and ascertain whether anything arises from them. This would be a very lengthy proceeding. As a rule it is sufficient if the members note the paragraphs on which they want to ask questions or to move something, and bring these up when the reading of the report is concluded. Whilst a branch cannot *amend* such a

report, the members are at liberty to pass any motions they please, expressing their views on the executive's decisions. After such points have been dealt with, the Chairman formally puts the motion, "That the Report be approved." If some items have not been approved the motion should add "with the exception of items nos....." This is voted upon without discussion.

261—*Reports of Deputations and Delegations*

Often branches find it necessary to appoint deputations or delegations to local bodies such as trades councils or labour parties, and to special conferences and meetings. Naturally they expect a report from such delegates as to the business upon which they have been deputed. Where several delegates have acted together they should confer as to who should make the report. This does not prevent *all* from reporting separately if they insist, but it is far better to have *one* report submitted of which the whole delegation can approve, rather than several separate versions. Any delegate may, of course, *supplement* briefly a report given by another, and if any differ entirely on some points from their colleagues they are at liberty to say so. It is always advisable that wherever possible the delegates submit their report in writing, but this is honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

262—"Acceptance as Read"

In debate, all reports are assumed to be written, and not verbal. Hence, the first motion, when the report of a delegate comes before the meeting, should be, "That the Report be accepted as having been read." To make the matter quite clear where a verbal report has been given, it would meet the case if the motion was, "That the Report be accepted as having been given." The branch, after passing this formal motion

(which merely records that the delegates or deputation have fulfilled their duty) is at liberty to deal with the items arising from the report as in paragraphs 259 and 260.

263—*Balance Sheets and Auditors' Reports*

Branch balance sheets should be read by the auditors, who give a report as to the condition of the books, and as to whether the balance sheet accurately reflects the position of the accounts. It is no part of the auditors' duty to criticise the *policy* of the items as they are not concerned with the reasons for the expenditure. That is a matter for the branch or the committee. But they must see that the balance sheet truly describes the financial position of the society. As soon as the report and balance sheets have been read a motion should be moved, "That the report and balance sheet be accepted as having been read." Where a balance sheet has been circulated beforehand, it is always formally accepted "as having been read." This is passed formally without discussion.

264—*Discussion on Balance Sheet*

A further motion should then be proposed, "That the auditors' report and balance sheet be approved." Questions and discussion may be now allowed on the items figuring on the balance sheet, which may be criticised by the meeting, and amendments are permissible. It is quite in order for the meeting to refuse to accept any item on the balance sheet. In such an event the correct course is to move an amendment, "That item — on the balance sheet be referred back to the auditors." If this is carried the final motion would read, "That the report and balance sheet as amended be approved." The members may, if they desire, by subsequent motions then give instructions as to future financial policy arising from

such items. Alternatively the members may by amendment refer back the whole balance sheet and report. The balance sheets of executive and district committees are treated as part of the report of such bodies, and should be dealt with by the branches as provided in paragraphs 259 and 260.

265—Committee Reports (*Municipalities*)

It may not be inopportune to refer to the method adopted by certain town councils and public bodies in dealing with the reports of the committees under their control. The work of public bodies is usually split up amongst a number of committees, each dealing with different sections of civic activity. Reports of the meetings of each committee in an epitomised form are submitted to the full council for confirmation. The committee's resolutions dealing with minor matters are proceeded with without waiting for this confirmation. To illustrate the method of dealing with the report of a given committee, we shall take the Tramways Committee. Each member of the Council has been provided with a copy of the report, and is supposed to be familiar with its contents.

266—Opposed Business

The Chairman of the Tramways Committee rises and, referring to the report (each paragraph of which is numbered), says, "I beg to move that paragraph (1) be approved." Unless there is any dissent, the Mayor at once taps the desk in front of him with a small mallet. This is equivalent to declaring the motion carried. If a member desires to raise a question, he must do so immediately the motion is moved. The Chairman of the committee then replies. If the member desires to refer the paragraph back to the committee he merely says "opposed." The whole of

the report is then gone through in this manner, the opposed paragraphs being deferred until the rest of the report has been approved. Then the opposed paragraphs are brought forward again, and dealt with in strict rotation. Usually the member who opposed brings forward an amendment, "That the paragraph be referred back with a recommendation that . . . (here follows the recommendation)." This is seconded and discussed, and usually the Chairman of the committee concerned replies. This is strictly in order, because the amendment to refer back is moved to his motion, "That the Report be approved." The vote is then taken on the amendment, and, if carried, the Mayor puts the final motion as: "That the Report as amended be approved." If the amendment is defeated, the motion is finally put, "That the Report be approved." This method is somewhat complicated to the novice, but seems an expeditious way of carrying on the business.

267—*L.C.C. Procedure*

The London County Council has a rather different procedure, and discriminates between ordinary reports of committees which are submitted at each meeting, and periodical reports which are submitted every six months. The ordinary reports deal with matters which must be reported to or decided by the Council at the time, and the periodical reports indicate the other principal actions taken by the committee under delegated powers. The reports of committees are included in the agenda paper which is circulated to members two days before the Council meeting. When a periodical report comes before the Council it is formally received, but on any portion of it three kinds of motion are possible: (1) instructing the committee to submit further information; (2) regretting the committee's decision; or (3) instructing the committee to pursue a different course in future.

No new principles may be laid down by such motions, nor may the first two kinds be amended. An ordinary report is moved by the Chairman or another member of the Committee. The recommendations, if any, are taken one by one and if adopted at once become resolutions of the Council. On any recommendation a motion may be made to refer the matter back to the Committee, and such motion may contain instructions as to what the Committee should do. Under the L.C.C. procedure the reference back is treated as a motion and can itself be amended. The L.C.C. provides an alternative procedure by allowing a recommendation to be amended in full Council, thus avoiding the necessity for the item to be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration. It is interesting to note that the L.C.C. procedure does not provide for amendments to amendments, and amendments are permitted only to distinct motions.

268—*Summary of Chapter Ten*

On special reports three points to consider : (1) reading ; (2) general policy ; and (3) detailed construction. After reading, next motion is, "That the Report be read a second time." Debate then on general principles only. If motion adopted general policy settled. Acceptance of minority report may be moved as amendment. If carried displaces principal report. Report then moved paragraph by paragraph. Only detailed criticism allowed here. Any paragraph may be amended or referred back. Final motion, "That Report (as amended) be approved," cannot be discussed or amended. Resolutions then passed to give effect to report. Minutes of administrative and special committees treated like a report. Chairman of committee moves, "Report of committee be adopted," and calls attention to any special item. Report taken paragraph by paragraph and sometimes resolutions passed instructing action before whole report is finished. Final motion, "That Report (or minutes), be adopted." Branch com-

mittee reports treated less formally. Whole report read and then general discussion, when members may move any motion desired. Only parent body may amend reports of its own committees. Executive reports cannot be rejected wholly or amended by branches. First read in full then motions passed on matters arising. These may express dissent or approval. Executive meantime may have acted on report. Final motion, "That Executive Report be approved," adding words covering items not approved. Reports of delegations and deputations treated like other reports. Auditors' report and balance sheet first accepted as read, but later motion moved, "That Report be approved." This gives opportunity for criticism or amendment to refer items back. Executive balance sheets treated as part of executive report by branches. Some municipalities reserve opposed business until after non-contentious items are finished. London County Council requires notice of motion, and limits references back when dealing with recommendations.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Paragraphs 269—337

Concerning Conferences

The longest chapter of all, but divided into sections so that it may be taken in small doses. Section (a) makes general observations applicable to all, (b) depicts a local conference, (c) a national congress, (d) an international conference and (e) concludes with a code of standing orders.

(a) General Observations

269—*Conference Means to Confer*

There are conferences and conferences. There are annual conferences and special conferences. There are local conferences, area conferences and national conferences. Last but not least, there are international conferences. We shall describe these various types later, but first let us make some general observations. Conferences may be large or small, but the purpose of all should be the same, namely, to bring people together to *confer* on some subject. The main difference between a conference and a public meeting is this. Conferences are convened for discussion, and public meetings are promoted for propaganda.

270—*Meeting Not a Conference*

The speakers are appointed to persuade the audience to agree with the policy they are advocating. Of course this is not true of every public meeting. On occasions meetings are held where all present are given the opportunity of putting their point of view, and where no premeditated policy is put forward. But these are more in the nature of conferences and not public meetings, in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term. Public meetings nowadays are generally assemblies of persons who have come together to listen to someone else. Those present are usually required to take no bigger part than that of asking a question, if they wish, and putting up their hands to vote.

271—*Purpose of Conference*

But the purpose of a conference is to *confer*, and those who attend expect to have the *opportunity* of conferring. It is perfectly proper that a policy should be stated from the platform in order to be criticised con-

structively or strengthened by the advice of those present. But the expounding of a policy should never at a conference be carried to the length of excluding discussion from the floor. The type of conference we are thinking about is that to which delegates have been invited. Delegates must be *appointed* by someone. The purpose of the conference is to ascertain through them the views of those whom the delegates represent ; then to mould these opinions into some constructive policy. It may be that the broad lines of policy have already been determined, but before final decisions are taken it is desired that the views of the branches should be ascertained through a delegate conference. Needless to say, the general rules of procedure we have described apply to conferences as well as other forms of meetings. Conferences which are held at regular periods, whether annual or biennial conferences, are usually governed by standing orders specially drafted for the purpose. We give an example of these at the end of this Chapter. Before we go on to give a description of particular kinds of conferences, let us look at what arrangements are necessary in connection with the hall.

272—Choosing the Hall

First as to the choice of hall. Where the conference will last for several days, it is essential to see to the seating accommodation for the delegates, the platform and such ante-rooms as may be necessary for executive bodies, standing orders committees and officials associated with the conference. The stewarding, the rostrum, microphone and all one might call the mechanics of the conference, should be carefully attended to. Proper accommodation should be provided for the press, whose table should be situated as near to the platform as possible. They should be given as much room as is convenient. Too often they are jammed up into the tiniest space and have

a thoroughly inconvenient time of it, trying to report the mixed accents of the delegates, to say nothing of the mixed diction. A little forethought on the part of the Secretary or his colleagues will always be appreciated by the reporters. A good Secretary will take care to attend to all such details. The acoustics, or hearing properties of the hall, should be tried out. When judging the acoustics of a hall always remember that an empty hall is much different from a full one. Your voice may be heard perfectly when the hall is empty, but when there are people in it, it may be quite another matter.

273—*Platform Arrangements*

The arrangements for the platform are not the least important. If there is room, the committee under whose jurisdiction the conference is being held should be seated on the platform. If space can be provided the best arrangement is to have a table running right across the platform with each member allocated a seat. The Chairman should sit in the centre and be raised above the others slightly. The Secretary should see that the Chairman always has a bell. At some conferences an electric bell is provided. We have known conferences where an attempt has been made to conduct the proceedings with a mallet, but for big conferences this is utterly futile. The Chairman should have a good bell that can be heard in the hall, and not a tinkling little thing which only the platform can hear. It goes without saying that a water bottle and glasses for speakers to use are elementary provisions which should not be overlooked.

274—*Tables for Delegates*

If space permits, it is advisable at such a conference to provide the delegates with trestle tables at which they can sit and on which they can put their documents. If, however, this involves that half the delegates

have to sit with their backs towards the Chairman, it is better to sacrifice the tables altogether, unless they can be arranged up and down the hall lengthways, instead of across it. Even then before the end of the week, complaints will be heard from delegates who have to screw themselves round every time someone is speaking. For large annual conferences organisations sometimes conduct an official ballot for the places where delegates of particular societies or groups of societies may sit. We have spoken of provision for a rostrum and a microphone. These are not essentials, of course, but their use is on the increase at large conferences. Some consider that the provision of a rostrum for the speakers rather tends to intimidate them. It is sometimes said that young delegates cannot screw up their courage to face an audience. Our experience does not confirm this, although there may be some speakers who would be deterred.

275—*Speaking from Rostrum*

We recall the first time that a rostrum was used at the Trades Union Congress. Many experienced delegates were very doubtful about its value. They considered that the old practice was the one to be preferred. This was to speak from the delegate's place on the floor. Sometimes delegates would improvise a platform by standing on the seat, but upholstered seats do not benefit by such treatment. Experience soon showed that these fears were unfounded, but it was some time before the ice was broken. We remember looking apologetically at the rostrum standing empty while delegate after delegate spoke from his place on the floor. Then Mr. J. R. Clynes, M.P., rose to speak. The Chairman appealed to him to set an example to the delegates by coming to the rostrum. Clynes, like the good fellow he is, willingly did so, although his clearness

of articulation made him audible where other speakers had been imperfectly heard. Once the plunge had been taken, other delegates good-humouredly came forward, and ever since the rostrum has always been used by the delegates at the Trades Union Congress.

276—*A Successful Experiment*

To test whether there was a general objection to the rostrum, two or three years after it had come into use the General Council of the T.U.C. decided that at the opening session the use of the rostrum should be optional. This was announced by the Chairman. The delegates seemed to feel that this put them on their mettle, and that they were being invited to show how well they could be heard when speaking from their places on the floor. One or two did so, and what might have been expected happened. They were forced to speak with their backs to some part of the audience, unless they were fortunate or unfortunate enough, as the case may be, to be right in the back row. Immediately there was a chorus of "rostrum" from the delegates who were listening, and who soon found that it was impossible to hear so well when the rostrum was not being used. Since when the Trades Union Congress has used no other.

277—*Rostrum Not Always Necessary*

This is not to say that a rostrum is necessary on all occasions. That depends upon the size of the hall and the number of delegates to be addressed, as well as upon the duration of the conference. It might not be worth while to provide a rostrum for a single day's conference, although that is done by the Trades Union Congress on special occasions when a one-day conference has to be called. The organisers of the

conference can judge for themselves, but where a large conference is concerned it will be found to be an advantage to use a rostrum. Where a rostrum is provided it should never be placed directly in front of the Chairman, but a little to one side. It is advisable to have a desk built on to the rostrum on which a delegate can place his notes. The rostrum should always be placed lower than the level of the Chairman. He must stand out above all others when he has to intervene.

278—*The Microphone*

The microphone stands in a similar category to the rostrum. It is not an essential and can be discarded if felt desirable. Its use has to be learned. Some people imagine that they must have their nose rammed inside it. They roar down it in much the same fashion that the captain of a tug-boat shouts down the speaking-tube to the engineer. The result is that a booming noise is set up in the microphone which shatters all its advantages. A speaker who has a soft and not very resonant voice will find the microphone a boon. He should stand near to it until he feels sure it is catching the sound waves from his voice. Those with strong, metallic voices need not stand so near.

(b) Local Conferences

279—General Description

We have been thinking so far more in terms of a national conference, lasting some days, than of a local one of short duration, so now let us describe a local conference. The actual subject matter with which a conference is to deal makes little difference to its organisation. The description which follows may be applicable to almost any type of local delegate conference. We must, however, have some type of conference in mind and we will assume for descriptive purposes that it is a political conference, especially called to discuss some particular subject. Let us suppose the Labour Party desired to consult its constituent branches concerning preparations for a forthcoming General Election. How would it go about it? As a national organisation it has branches in almost every part of the country, with well-defined areas into which, for organisational purposes, the country is divided. It would then select some town or towns in each of these areas in which to hold local or area conferences. It would entrust its Organisation or other special Committee, and its officials, to attend to the organisation of these, in co-operation with the local agent or branches. These branches are officially called "constituency parties," but here we have used the terms "branch" and "party" interchangeably.

280—Conference Arrangements

The first thing the Committee would have to determine would be the number of conferences, and the towns in which they were to be held; next, the date, whether at week-ends or at other periods. Week-ends would probably commend themselves as affording the best opportunity to the delegates to attend.

The next point would be as to whether the conferences would all be on the same week-end, or on successive week-ends until all the areas had been covered. These are important questions as the number of speakers who are available at any particular week-end is naturally limited, and in consequence it might be necessary to spread the conferences over a longer period. On the other hand, if the matter was extremely urgent it might be possible to hold all the conferences during the same week-end. But such a decision would undoubtedly throw an added strain on the resources of the organisation. As it is advisable to give from four to six weeks' notice to the local parties, all arrangements must be started at headquarters much earlier.

281—*Providing the Speakers*

The next thing to be considered, is who is to be invited to speak. The nature of the subject will naturally determine this to a considerable extent. For purposes of description we have supposed that the subject is to be the preparations of the Party for a forthcoming General Election. This may sound a simple one, but as it involves the financial and other resources of the Party, it is well it should be dealt with by someone who has some expert knowledge of the subject. It is almost certain that headquarters will have to supply at least one speaker, but he might not be in direct personal contact with this phase of the Party's work. In such a case it would be usual to provide him with notes of the principal points to be made at the Conference. These, together with his general background of experience, would serve for the occasion.

282—*Completing the Arrangements*

These preliminaries decided, enquiries would be made locally, the choice of a Chairman and local conference secretary would be made in consultation with the

local branch, the hall would be selected, and the time fixed. Then the Agenda would be finally drafted and circulated to the branches, inviting them to appoint delegates and stating the delegation fee, (if any) which would be charged. Whether this was done by the local Party or by headquarters would be a matter of mutual arrangement. All we have to remember is that someone must attend to these things, and preferably the Chairman of the meeting should be kept in contact with the arrangements, and assure himself that everything is being properly attended to.

283—Appointment of Delegates

Local parties would be invited to send delegates, and might on occasions be given complete freedom as to the number. Usually, however, a definite limit is fixed. This enables those organising the conference to estimate more accurately the probable attendance. It is usual to have at least two delegates from each, as it is inadvisable that one individual should be the sole medium whereby the views of the branch can be ascertained. Moreover there is the reverse side to be considered. A report of the conference will have to be made to the branches by the delegates, and sometimes two people will see a conference in better perspective than one.

284—Convening the Conference

The notice sent out from headquarters convening the conference might be worded something like this :

17th August, 1939.

Dear Secretary,

Your organisation is cordially invited to appoint delegates to a Conference of Labour Parties and kindred organisations, to be held at the TOWN HALL, GATESBOROUGH, on SATURDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER, 1939, at 3 p.m.

The Conference will give special attention to matters of organisation concerning the forthcoming GENERAL ELECTION, and the means of popularising Labour's programme.

The Conference will be addressed by
THE RT. HON. S. E. GREEN, M.P.

Chairman: MR. F. STRONG, J.P.

Your organisation is invited to appoint as many delegates as possible. A delegation fee of 6d. per delegate will be charged, up to a maximum of 2s. 6d., for which any number may be appointed.

Application for credentials must be made on the attached form to the Conference Secretary.

Please bring this communication to the notice of your organisation as early as possible to ensure that arrangements are made for your Party to be fully represented.

Yours sincerely,

G. R. SHEPHERD,
National Agent.

Sometimes the convening notice is issued as a folder, with a bold announcement of the meeting on the front and a photograph of the principal speaker, followed by an inset letter on an inner page.

285—*Delegates' Credentials*

The circular would probably contain a portion either perforated or marked so that it could be torn off. Here is the sort of thing we mean:

APPLICATION FOR CREDENTIALS.

Name of organisation.....

Secretary: Name.....

Address.....

The above organisation has appointed..... delegates to attend the mass Conference to be held at the Town Hall, Gatesborough, on Saturday, 30th September, 1939, at 3 p.m.

1 enclose s. d. as delegation fee at 6d. per delegate (up to 2s. 6d. for any number).

(Signed) Secretary.....

(Complete this form and return at your earliest convenience to the Conference Secretary, Mr. A. M. Eager, 18, Canvas Street, Gatesborough.)

If time permits each delegate is sent a separate credential *card*, which he hands to the stewards at the door on the day of the conference, but if not the credential *slip* would be handed in. The Secretary would then compile a list of these, and early in the proceedings announce the number of delegates who were in attendance. It is usually not possible at a week-end or one-day conference to arrange that particular delegates sit in reserved seats. The rule is first come first served, and the stewards who have been appointed should always be at hand in case they need to give any information or help to the delegates.

286—Press Arrangements

Headquarters would probably have indicated whether the press should be admitted or not. Wedded as the Labour Movement is to the policy of open diplomacy, this doctrine does not mean that private and internal matters must necessarily be discussed in public. On such occasions, the presence of the press rather cramps the style of speakers. One can never be sure that an objective report will appear. So many newspapers nowadays like to pick out bits here and there, to help to provide the series of daily sensations which they deem so essential.

287—Keep to Time-Table

On the day of the conference the Chairman and local officers arrive early, and the speakers are all in attendance in the ante-room. The Chairman gives each a copy of his Agenda and Time-table (provided by the energetic Secretary), fixing the limit for each. He smooths any ruffled feelings over this, all confer together and know precisely what they are to do. Ample time has been allowed for questions and discussion. In short, everything is prepared. But "the best laid schemes o' mice an'

men gang aft a-gley." So let us appeal to everyone to keep to the arrangements made. We remember attending a conference a few years ago on a Saturday afternoon. The Chairman had quite properly taken his task seriously, and had come adequately prepared. This was a compliment both to the audience and speakers, and at first we appreciated it as such. For ten minutes we were all very interested. Then we grew a little apprehensive.

288—Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman's remarks expanded from the expected brief introductory speech to a lecture on the subject down for discussion. When twenty minutes had elapsed, a delegate in the audience arose and protested that they had come to hear others besides the Chairman, and to take part in the discussion themselves. The Chairman, though a little disconcerted, continued for a further ten minutes, by which time everybody was on edge. No doubt he had not the slightest intention of going on so long. Like many others he evidently had not taken the elementary precaution of reading his speech over privately and timing himself. This experience is not so uncommon as not to require guarding against. A Chairman can hardly expect other speakers to keep to a schedule if he himself does not set the example.

289—Ten Minutes Enough

The Chairman of our imaginary conference does not fall into any such error. Prompt to time he rings his bell, declares the conference open, and describes in a ten-minute speech what it is all about. Ten minutes is a reasonable time, and few Chairmen would think it too much. There are always late arrivals at any conference, and if the Chairman merely introduces the speaker in a few sentences, the chances are that the speaker's opening remarks will mingle with

the sound of people moving chairs to allow other delegates to get in, with the consequent dropping of umbrellas, walking sticks and such like. An experienced Chairman expects all this, and it does not disturb him, and so he uses up his ten minutes while the meeting is settling down. If he perceives gaps in the audience, he may ask them to close up a little and allow room in the back rows for late-comers. Immediately the Chairman rises to speak, the doors of the hall should be closed, if only to impress upon late-comers and those delegates who persist in hanging about the corridors talking or smoking, that the conference has commenced and silence is required.

290—Announcing the Arrangements

When the Chairman has concluded he should call upon the conference Secretary, who will read any essential correspondence, state the number of delegates present, what local parties and other interests are represented, and any other relevant particulars. This should be a very brief performance, after which the Chairman should read aloud the Agenda, announcing the time to be allowed for questions and discussion, with the limitations fixed for each speaker.

291—Specimen Agenda

This is the sort of Agenda which might be used :

CONFERENCE AGENDA.

1. Chairman's remarks (3.0 p.m. to 3.10 p.m.)
2. Correspondence and
announcements (3.10 p.m. to 3.20 p.m.)
3. Mr. S. E. Green, M.P. ... (3.20 p.m. to 4.0 p.m.)
4. Questions (4.0 p.m. to 4.20 p.m.)
5. Discussion (4.20 p.m. to 5.20 p.m.)
6. Motion (if any) (5.20 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.)
7. Close of Conference.

This being a special conference, it is unlikely that there will be any standing orders governing the

proceedings. It is scarcely possible, at a Saturday afternoon conference, to allow speakers in discussion more than five minutes, and sometimes they have to be restricted to three minutes.

292—*Time Limits in Discussion*

It is a moot question as to whether the Chairman should announce the limits immediately, or reserve them until the time to commence discussion is actually reached. In either case, he should always get the delegates to agree to whatever limits are proposed. If any delegates propose different limits these must, of course, be submitted to the conference for decision. Such motions would have to be seconded, but little or no discussion should be allowed on them. Because of the possibility of controversy over this matter, it is perhaps preferable for the Chairman to defer the announcement of the time limits until the item of discussion is reached. At the beginning of a conference there is a greater tendency to spend time over matters of procedure such as this than there is later on. When the time for discussion has arrived the appetite of the delegates has been whetted, and they will be unlikely to waste time discussing such details. They look at their watches, realise how quickly the time has passed, remember that they must catch a train home very soon, and determine to get down to real discussion without delay. So perhaps, all things considered, the Chairman would do better to defer this announcement. But he must judge for himself.

293—*Address and Questions*

After the opening announcements have been made the Chairman then invites the principal speaker to address the conference. The latter lucidly explains why preparation for the General Election is necessary, one being just round the corner, describes the policy recommended by the National Executive Committee,

and winds up with an eloquent appeal to all persons to work as never before to ensure the return of the Party candidates. When the applause has died away the Chairman invites questions. He should ask the questioners to get straight to the point, and stress the fact that he wants *questions* and not speeches. He should not allow any delegate to ask more than one question if others are waiting to put theirs. The speaker may prefer to answer the questions as they are put, or alternatively to answer them at the end when all have been asked. The second method tends to condense his answers, and thus conserve time. In our opinion it tends to make the proceedings less interesting, as an answer to one question often stimulates delegates to ask other questions.

294—*Speeches in Discussion*

At the end of questions the meeting is thrown open for discussion. Usually there is no lack of speakers and their contributions may be of great help, both in reflecting local opinion and making useful suggestions to headquarters. The discussion having been closed, the speaker from headquarters is given the opportunity of replying, during which time he promises that all constructive suggestions will be considered, politely but firmly corrects any errors and misunderstandings, dissipates suspicion, and welds the delegates' minds into a common will to strive for the Party's success. A motion endorsing the policy of the Executive may, if desired, then be briefly moved and seconded, and if there is no opposition or amendment, carried with acclamation. The Chairman expresses the thanks of the conference to the speakers, thanks the delegates for their attendance, and the conference disperses. Delegates who belong to the same branch, later co-ordinate the rough notes they have taken, consult together, and duly submit a report to their members.

(c) A National Congress

295—*Trades Union Congress*

Now that we have seen how a local conference works let us have a glance at a rather bigger affair. This time it will be an annual conference of Trades Unions. We can illustrate this best by describing the proceedings at the Annual Meeting of the T.U.C. The Trades Union Congress is a voluntary association of Trade Unions. It was formed in 1868. Practically every year since then an Annual Meeting or Congress has been held. This always begins on the first Monday in September of each year and continues for the rest of the week. The Congress is composed of delegates nominated by the Trade Unions who are affiliated to the T.U.C. Its membership in 1939 was approximately five millions. Unions are allowed to send one delegate for every 5,000 members.

296—*Unions Appoint the Delegates*

The names of these delegates must be sent in to the General Secretary of the T.U.C. a month before the Congress starts. The names are then grouped together on a list, which shows the name of the Union, the delegates they are sending to Congress, and the amount paid to the Congress funds for the current year. The Congress meets in a different town every year. The place of meeting is usually decided by the General Council (which is the executive committee) after consulting the local Trades Council. This Trades Council is a local association of Trade Union Branches.

297—*What the Delegates Discuss*

Some people think that Trade Unions are only concerned with questions of wages and hours of labour. True, these are very important matters to Trade Unionists, but they are by no means the only

subjects which come before the T.U.C. Congress discusses a very wide range of subjects of an industrial, economic and political character affecting the Trade Unions of Great Britain, in the national and international sphere. The scope of Trade Union activities has greatly developed during recent years, and the T.U.C. and its affiliated Unions are brought into consultation by the Government, Employers' Organisations, and other bodies on a great number of subjects.

298—*The General Council*

Congress meets only once a year, although special Congresses are held at any time if it is felt necessary. In the period between the Congresses the General Council is actively at work, dealing with the matters which have been decided at the last Congress. In addition, it deals with numerous questions which arise during the course of the year. Its duties and responsibilities are very great, and it has many Committees specialising on different aspects of Trade Union work. The General Council is elected by the delegates who attend the Annual Congress. It consists of 32 members in all, who hold office for one year.

299—*Wallet of Documents*

On their arrival at the hall on Monday morning delegates are presented with a wallet, which contains various documents which they will need in the course of the week's business, together with the badge of Congress. All these documents are of distinct colours, so that the delegates can identify them easily. At least 14 days before, they have already been supplied with the Report of the General Council, which, as we shall see, is the principal business taken after the formal opening.

300—*The Floor*

The delegates sit in the body of the hall. They find in their wallets a seating plan which shows just where they are to sit. Delegates in a particular industry are seated in the same quarter of the hall. The delegates of an individual Union are seated next to one another. The General Council conducts a ballot for position, thus avoiding any suspicion of unfairness in the allocation of seats. This placing of delegates with similar interests next to one another has another advantage. Apart from the official deliberations of Congress, it is very valuable to bring delegates into contact with one another. Unions who have been conducting correspondence together are often able through their representatives at Congress, to transact business which otherwise might be difficult. Apart altogether from this, the intermingling of delegate with delegate is a means of establishing lasting friendships amongst people in the Movement.

301—*The Platform*

On the platform in Congress sits the President, who controls the deliberations. On his right is the President of the previous year, and on his left the General Secretary. Seated on either side of the President and stretching across the platform are the members of the General Council. Speakers have been appointed by them to deal with any question which may require elucidation from the General Council. Behind them are distinguished visitors, many of whom have attended the Congress year after year for a long period. Among the distinguished visitors are fraternal delegates, several of whom have been sent from organisations overseas.

302—*Opening of Congress*

A few minutes before eleven on the opening day a handsome silver bell is placed upon the President's table. Promptly at 11 o'clock the President, accom-

panied by the Mayor, Town Clerk and other civic dignitaries, and the members of the General Council, ascend to the platform. An official welcome is given by the Mayor, who is usually followed by the Chairman of the Trades Council, after which the President of the Congress delivers his address to the delegates. This address, in conformity with the general practice at large annual conferences, is always read by the President. Copies are distributed by the stewards to the delegates a few minutes before the President rises. By the time this and other formalities have been completed it is usually a little after 1 p.m., and Congress adjourns until the afternoon session.

303—General Purposes Committee

Immediately on the resumption, a report on the Agenda is given by the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee. This Committee has been elected by the previous Congress, and its function is to supervise the Agenda of motions and other matters of business which will come before the Congress. Sometimes it is referred to as the Standing Orders Committee. Let us for a moment see how the Agenda is compiled.

304—Resolutions or Motions

Some weeks before the Congress commences the Unions have been invited to send in motions to the General Council. In the Standing Orders of the Trades Union Congress these motions are referred to as resolutions. It is the term which has been used throughout the history of the Congress, and was no doubt framed on the precedents of the House of Commons. There, when a Committee of the whole House has been considering a matter and has passed *resolutions* thereon, these are remitted to the House

by the Chairman of the Committee. The Speaker refers to these *motions* as *resolutions*, despite the fact that amendments can still be moved to them. They are in that sense *motions* before the Houses, although *resolutions* of the Committee. The reason why the word "resolution" is employed by the T.U.C. instead of "motion," is that every motion which appears on the Agenda has been passed by the Union which puts it forward. It is, therefore, *a resolution of that Union*.

305—Motion More Accurate

Still, the term is not strictly accurate, as when the Agenda is before the Congress, everything which appears upon it is a *motion*, and does not become a *resolution of the Congress* until it has been passed by the delegates. The Unions avail themselves very readily of the opportunity to send in motions although no Union is allowed to send in more than three motions. These motions are grouped under subject headings, and are printed and sent out in a Preliminary Agenda to all the Unions. These are invited to send in amendments to the motions.

306—The Final Agenda

When these have been received they are printed together with the motions in a Final Agenda. This is circulated to the Union offices 14 days before the Congress commences. In addition to this, there is the General Council's Report, which we shall describe in a moment. The motions are all numbered consecutively, so that delegates can refer to them quite easily. In order that important matters of policy which may have arisen suddenly may not be overlooked, the General Council and the Unions are empowered by the consent of the General Purposes Committee and the delegates to send in emergency motions.

307—*Composite Motions*

As will be realised, sometimes motions overlap one another. Societies may have sent in motions dealing with the same subject, putting forward substantially the same proposal. It would be a waste of time to discuss each of these motions separately. Therefore, an attempt is made to get agreement among the Unions moving these motions, so that a "composite" motion may be drawn up, which will cover all the motions sent in on a particular subject. In order to do this, the delegates of such Unions are called together on the Saturday preceding the opening of Congress. There, assisted by the General Council and its staff, the composite motions are drafted and submitted to the General Purposes Committee. If a Union does not agree to its motion being treated in this way, it can insist upon its motion being put separately to the Congress.

308—*General Purposes Report*

The Chairman of the General Purposes Committee submits a report of the final arrangements to the Congress. He explains what changes are to be made in the printed Agenda, and the delegates, with the Agendas before them, make the necessary alterations. Where composite motions have been agreed to, these are printed, numbered consecutively and circulated to the delegates on the Monday afternoon.

309—*The Programme of Business*

An attempt is made to arrange something in the form of a time-table, so that delegates will have a rough idea as to when certain business will be dealt with. This is called the "Programme of Business," which is always printed on green paper and received

by the delegates in the wallet which is handed to them on their arrival at the Congress Hall. This sets out the detailed items which will be taken on the various days of the week, during which the Congress is held. Naturally, as this programme mentions the motions, certain alterations have to be made in the event of these motions being grouped in composite motions. This, however, does not disturb the sequence of the business. The only difference is that instead of two or three motions being taken separately, one single motion may cover the subject.

310—General Council's Report

As has been stated, the General Council acts as an executive committee for the Congress. Naturally, it is expected to submit a Report of the work upon which it has been engaged. It prepares this at its July meeting, after which the Report is printed for circulation to the delegates. It is despatched to Unions at least 14 days before the Congress commences. This Report is very comprehensive, and usually consists of over 200 pages, classified and divided into sections with subject headings. The Report having been circulated, the delegate have an opportunity to examine it and make notes on any point which they might desire to raise at the Congress.

311—What the Report Contains

The subject-matter of the Report varies from year to year, but usually the first section, A, is an Introduction; B deals with Industrial Disputes; C, Disputes between Unions; D, Organisation; E, Unemployment; F, Safety and Welfare; G, Education; H, Trade Board Questions; I, Relations with the Co-operative Movement; J, Industrial and Economic Questions; K, International Activities, etc., etc. The last section is the Obituary, which

is a record of those devoted Trade Unionists who have passed away during the year. The Report is divided into paragraphs, each with a cross-heading and numbered, so that the delegates can easily follow the discussion.

312—*Standing Orders*

The Congress is governed by Standing Orders, which lay down the procedure which has to be followed at the Congress. They define also the powers and responsibilities of the General Council and its Committees. Under these Standing Orders it is stipulated that the Report of the General Council must be taken as the first business of the Congress, after the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee has given his report as to the way in which the motions are to be treated. These Standing Orders also fix the limit of time for the speeches of delegates. They are allowed five minutes only in which to make remarks upon the Report of the General Council. When especially important matters are before the Congress these time limits may be extended on a recommendation from the General Purposes Committee. Let us see for a moment how the Report of the General Council is dealt with.

313—*Discussion on the Report*

The Obituary section, containing the names of those who have passed away since the preceding Congress, is taken first, and the President requests all delegates to rise and to stand for a minute in silence. After this the Report is taken paragraph by paragraph, starting with the Introduction. The President announces: "We shall now take the Report of the General Council." He gives delegates time to take the Report from their wallets, and then he proceeds immediately with the Report. The President calls

out: "Paragraph 1, Congress membership. Paragraph 2, Organisation. Paragraph 3, Education." He goes on in this way, glancing his eye round Congress to see whether any delegate desires to speak on any of these paragraphs.

314—President Moves the Paragraphs

On these introductory paragraphs there is usually not much discussion, as the subject-matter is covered more fully by later sections of the Report. *When the President calls out the number and name of the paragraph he is formally moving the acceptance of that paragraph.* Unless the delegates dissent, it is taken that they approve of what the Council have said in the paragraph. It cannot be expected that everything in the General Council's Report will find favour with the delegates. Some delegate may think that they have omitted to do something or have not acted so decisively as he considers necessary.

315—Questions and Comments

Or he may merely desire to ask a question. Now is his chance. Up he jumps, and shouts out: "Paragraph 3, Mr. President." If it is merely a short question, the delegate will be invited by the President to put his question immediately. If, however, he desires to make a speech he is required to come to the front and speak from the special platform or rostrum, which is provided for delegates. If it is a question which does not require elaboration it will be answered immediately, under the direction of the President, by a member appointed by the General Council to deal with this subject. Usually, this member is the Chairman of the Committee which has been dealing with the matter during the year.

316—*Moving the Reference Back*

Sometimes a delegate will shout out: "I want to move the reference back of Paragraph 3, Mr. President." What he means by this is that he wants the Congress not to approve of the action of the General Council described in the paragraph. He wants the Congress to refer the whole paragraph back to them for reconsideration. In the language of debate this is called an "amendment to refer back." Sometimes he indicates the way in which he wants the paragraph altered, and moves its reference back with a recommendation that it be altered accordingly. He must, of course, say something to convince the delegates that his point of view is right. He is invited by the President to come to the front and to speak from the rostrum. From here he can be heard by the whole of the delegates, and in the five minutes which the Standing Orders allow him he must put before them convincing argument in support of his contention.

317—*The Red Light*

One minute before his time is up a red light is switched on from the platform and appears before the speaker in the rostrum. This light usually causes a good deal of merriment among the delegates, who regard it rather as a danger signal. Its purpose is, of course, to warn the speaker that his time has nearly expired, and to give him an opportunity to round off his remarks properly. Otherwise, he might be in the middle of expounding a point when he finds that he has no time left. Now and again, the President will allow the speaker a little extra time, with the consent of the delegates, but usually it is expected that delegates will condense their remarks into the time allowed.

318—*Seconding Reference Back*

When the delegate has finished the President asks: "Does anyone second the reference back?" *If no one does so, the President passes to the next paragraph,* because he presumes that as no one supports the speaker the Congress approves the action of the General Council. Perhaps, however, some other delegate agrees with the speaker in moving the reference back, and he rises to second the amendment. He, too, is required to come to the rostrum if he wishes to make a speech. He can, if he wishes, formally second the reference back without making a speech. After this other speakers may intervene, some to support the retention of the paragraph and others to urge its reference back. At the end of the discussion the President calls upon the speaker, appointed by the General Council, to reply, and this ends the debate.

319—*Taking the Vote*

The President then says: "I have moved the acceptance of Paragraph No. 3, and an amendment has been moved and seconded to refer this paragraph back to the General Council." There are three ways in which the vote can be taken. One is by voice. This is the usual method at Congress. The President says: "All those in favour of the reference back say 'Aye.'" Delegates who support this course shout out as loudly as they can "Aye." The President listens to the volume of sound, and then says: "All those against the reference back please say 'No.'" Then those who oppose the reference back will try to burst their lungs with a loud shout of "No." After listening to this, the President decides which are in the majority. If he is at all doubtful he may call upon the delegates to adopt another method of voting. This is by show of hands. Even after

this, some delegates may still feel that the issue is too serious, or that the voting is too close to be decided in this way. They will consequently call for a card vote.

320—*The Card Vote*

A card vote is the normal procedure on all first-class issues, but as it takes some time to carry out, frivolous calls for a card vote are disregarded. Unless there appears to be a reasonable number of delegates who really desire a card vote, the President will decide against it. If, however, a card vote is to be taken the procedure is as follows:—

Each General Secretary of the individual Trade Unions has had sent to him a card containing the number of votes to which his Union is entitled. The basis is one vote for each 1,000 members. A Union with 100,000 members would thus have a card with 100 on it. These cards must be carefully guarded, as their misuse would lead to serious trouble.

321—*The Tellers*

The cards are held up so that they can be seen and counted by tellers who have been specially appointed for this purpose. Each of these has a particular part of the hall to deal with, so that there can be no duplication of counting. The President has before him a plan showing where each teller is situated, and the number of votes to which delegates in his section are entitled. All this is done so that there should be no mistake made in the counting. It is so easy to make mistakes. We remember at one Congress when the voting was in the process of being taken, delegates from one part of the hall called out that their votes were not being counted. This seemed inexplicable and the voting had to be suspended while the cause was ascertained. The

explanation was very simple. One of the tellers had been called out of the hall to the telephone and, as bad luck would have it, a card vote had been demanded in his absence. Since that time the President always announces at the commencement of the vote "tellers in their places." The General Secretary then reads aloud the names of each teller who answers "Here," thus ensuring that each is in his place. The figures of the individual tellers are carefully checked before being handed up to the President. He then announces the result of the vote.

322—Resolutions Taken with Report

It may happen that a Union has put down a motion dealing with a subject in the Council's Report, but perhaps recommending another course of action. Consequently, when a paragraph has been reached which is also covered by such a motion, it is the usual practice to take the motion immediately the paragraph has been passed. *Occasionally there is a conflict between the methods proposed in the paragraph of the Report and the course outlined in the motion. In that case the motion is treated as an amendment to refer the Report back* with an instruction to the General Council to act in the manner proposed by the motion. Not all the motions deal with items covered by the Report, but those which do so are invariably taken in conjunction with the Report in the way we have described. After the Report has been gone through paragraph by paragraph its final approval is formally moved by the President and accepted by the Congress. Once the General Council's Report has been passed in this way the next business is the Report of the Auditors, two delegates who have been elected by the previous Congress to audit the accounts. The Balance Sheet has been circulated to Unions before

the Congress, but any delegate is at liberty to ask questions which are replied to by the Auditors or the General Secretary, as may be necessary.

323—Other Motions

Motions which do not deal with subjects already dealt with in the Report are taken separately after the Report has been completed. The mover of any motion is allowed ten minutes, the seconder seven. This is rather longer than the time allowed to speakers on the General Council Report. Succeeding speakers are limited, however, to five minutes. When several speakers wish to take part in the debate, the President calls upon them in the order in which they have "caught his eye." The motions are proposed and seconded in the customary way, and may be amended, in accordance with the general practices of debate. Verbal amendments are not allowed. After the discussion has proceeded for some time it is open to any delegate who has not spoken on the subject to move that the vote be taken. Other expedients for closing the debate, such as moving the Previous Question, the Next Business, etc., are also employed. The method of conducting the voting on the motions is exactly the same as that described earlier. Each motion is moved, seconded, debated and voted upon until the Agenda of motions has been completed.

324—Minutes and Report

The official minutes are recorded by the Secretary of the local Trades Council, whose appointment as Minute Secretary is usually moved by the President of Congress. The full proceedings of Congress are recorded by a staff of shorthand writers who work in relays taking verbatim notes. At the end of the week elections take place. These are for the purpose

of appointing the members of the General Council, the General Purposes Committee, Fraternal Delegates to other Congresses, and the Auditors. The voting is by secret ballot, and the results are compiled by scrutineers appointed by the Congress in the early part of the week. After the announcement of the results by the Chairman of the scrutineers, votes of thanks are passed to the President, the local officials and the press, and the Congress adjourns. Various facilities are provided for the delegates, including a writing room, post office, and an enquiry office from which are issued tickets for visitors' seats in the balcony. The General Council has a meeting room and office at the back of the platform from which information is also supplied to delegates. Here are stored the many files and documents required for the Congress debates, and which must always be ready for instant use. Arrangements at the annual conferences of the Labour Party, the Co-operative Union and many of the large Trade Unions are almost identical with what we have described in this section. If you are really interested in the subject you might do worse than visit these assemblies, and see them actually at work.

(d) An International Conference

325—*International Labour Organisation*

Now we shall try to describe how an international conference works, and for our example we shall take those held by the International Labour Organisation, which was established under the Versailles Peace Treaty, whose headquarters are at Geneva. These are among the best organised conferences of which we have had any experience. The object of this body is to investigate conditions of labour and to try to promote agreements improving them. Every year a Conference is held consisting of delegations from each of the different countries which belong to the organisation. These delegations are composed of four representatives, two of whom are Government delegates. In addition, one delegate represents employers and another the workers.

326—*Composition of Delegations*

In addition, two technical advisers may be appointed to assist each delegate for every item on the Agenda of the Conference. As there are always several items on the Agenda it follows that there are always present a considerable number of technical advisers in each delegation. Not every country sends the full number it is entitled to, but in recent years the total British delegation has seldom been less than 40. As there are over 50 countries which are entitled to send delegates, it is not surprising that the annual Conference is a very big affair. The duties and rights of members, and the procedure to be followed both in the full Conference and in the commissions and committees are fully set out in the Standing Orders. These are far too detailed to be given here, and the best we can do is to describe briefly how the Conference works.

327—*How Conference Works*

The Conference is organised by the Governing Body or Executive, which consists of 32 persons, 16 of whom represent governments, 8 represent workers and 8 employers. Government, employers' and workers' delegates all assemble in the Conference proper, but outside of this they have their own separate or group meetings. Thus all the workers' delegates and technical advisers will be brought together in the workers' group to discuss the Agenda, and to see whether it is possible for them to adopt a common policy. Similarly the employers have their separate group meetings, as also have the government delegates. The government representatives on the Governing Body are appointed by the government group. The workers' representatives are elected by the workers' group, and the employers by the employers' group.

328—*Delegates' Credentials*

The Conference itself is opened by the Chairman of the Governing Body, but he presides only until the Conference has elected its own President. The practice is to change the president every year. Every delegate to the Conference must have credentials to prove that he is entitled to attend. Sometimes there are disputes about this and if objection is taken to the presence of anyone the matter is referred to a credentials' committee, appointed by the Conference itself. This committee submits a report to the Conference which finally decides any disputed question.

329—*Conference Officials*

The officers of the Conference are the President and three vice-presidents, representing respectively the Government, employers' and workers' groups.

The Director of the Organisation acts as the General Secretary, and with his assistants composes the secretariat. The President controls the debates but takes no part in them himself. Speakers must ask his permission and are called upon in the order in which they have sent up their names.

330—*The Procedure*

The procedure in debate closely resembles that in operation in Great Britain, but there are some variations. Movers of motions and amendments may speak twice. Thirty delegates must support the closure before it can be considered. Before it is put the President must read out the names of the delegates who were down to speak. Five-minute speeches are allowed against the closure, whereas in Great Britain no speeches are permitted. Even if the closure is carried, every group has the right to have its own point of view on the main question stated by one speaker before the final vote is taken. In Britain only the mover of an original motion can reply.

331—*Voting*

Voting on a number of questions is by show of hands, but on all important matters the vote is taken by record. In taking a record vote, the name of each country is called out aloud by a member of the Secretariat. The two delegates representing the Government vote first, by shouting "Yes" or "No" as the case may be. Then the workers' and employers' delegates reply separately. This process is gone through for each country represented at the Conference. Immediately any delegate has replied to the question as to whether he is in favour of the proposition, an electric sign is switched on, which shows in English and in French whether he has voted "Yes" or

"No," or whether he has abstained. This shows the whole Conference how each delegate has voted, and has the advantage that if a delegate has been misheard, or has made a mistake in voting, he can at once correct it. All the votes, whether for or against, are then counted up, as on some subjects it is necessary that two-thirds of the total votes cast shall be in favour of a proposition before it can be declared to be carried. Thus, if the Conference makes a *recommendation* which is to be submitted to the different Governments with a view to their giving effect to it, a two-thirds majority is necessary. This means that if the total of votes cast for and against the recommendation is 100, 66 of them would have to be in favour of the recommendation before it could be regarded as carried. In other cases, the Conference may decide to adopt a *convention*, as it is called. It is the duty of Governments once a convention has been passed by the International Labour Conference to give effect to this by ratifying it, or in other words, by passing it into law. On some subjects a simple majority only is required. It should be noted that delegates alone can vote. Technical advisers have no votes.

332—The Conference Hall

Now that we have described the procedure, let us have a peep at the Conference. The floor of the hall is taken up with tables, one for each delegation. At them sit four persons, two government delegates, one employer and one worker. Rising from the floor of the hall are tiers of desks, not split up into fours as are those on the floor, but in continuous lines and divided by gangways. Here sit the technical advisers. In addition there are five galleries, two for the press, two for members of the staff, and a large gallery for members of the public.

333—*The Interpreters*

What steps are taken to ensure that all the members of the numerous delegations understand the speeches of this polyglot assembly? French and English are the official languages used, but not everybody can speak those languages. The practice usually is for a speaker to talk in his own native language, and while extended translations are made in French and English, summarised translations are made in other languages. The interpretations in the majority of cases are made simultaneously with the speech. This sounds incredible, so let us explain how it is done. Beneath the rostrum are seated a number of interpreters, each holding a microphone pressed against his mouth. The microphone is a sort of oblong box, designed so that whilst it muffles the interpreter's voice, so that it can scarcely be heard by those around him, it, nevertheless, carries his words clearly along the wires to distant earphones. As each sentence is uttered by the speaker so it is interpreted into these microphones in the language required.

334—*Simultaneous Translations*

We shall fit on a pair of the headphones with which each delegate and adviser is provided. A square metal plate is inset into the desk in front of us and marked in white with the figures one to nine. An ebonite knob, like those on a wireless set, is in the centre of this plate. Directions for using this are contained on a writing pad by the side of the instrument, and indicate which language corresponds to the various numbers on the plate. Translations can be provided in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, Dutch, Swedish, etc., etc. For example, let us suppose the speaker was using the French language. By turning the arrow on the knob to No. 3 we would hear the

interpretation being given sentence by sentence in English. If we were fortunate enough to speak any other language we could switch the knob still further round and listen to Dutch or Chinese or whatever we fancied.

335—*Volume of Speeches can be Controlled*

There is a second use for these headphones. If an English speaker was addressing the Conference and we wished to hear him more clearly, we could automatically connect our headphones with the microphones on the platform in front of him. Simply by turning the arrow to figure 1 on the plate we can regulate the volume of sound by individual control. The effect of the simultaneous interpretation system is twofold: (*a*) the conference loses the minimum of time through the barrier of language, and (*b*) everyone is listening at the same time so there is the minimum of talking among the delegates.

336—*The Committees*

The Conference appoints committees to deal with certain points on the Agenda, and these committees in due course submit reports to the full Conference. The Conference then has the right to amend, to approve, or to take such other action as the delegates deem fit. The machinery of the I.L.O. is admirably designed to deal with the tremendous difficulties inherent in the organisation of a conference of such a universal character.

(e) Standing Orders of the Co-operative Congress

1. The Standing Orders Committee, which shall consist of a member of each Sectional Board and of the Irish Executive, shall regulate all matters requiring discussion connected with the Congress proceedings. The Committee shall meet at such time before the Congress as the Executive Committee may fix, and shall cause minutes to be kept of its proceedings.

2. At a meeting before Congress the Executive Committee may prepare, or cause to be prepared, resolutions on the various matters which are dealt with in the Report of the Central Board, or in regard to any other proposals which they may deem advisable to be brought before the Congress, or which may have been brought forward by any society entitled to be represented at the Congress in accordance with the provisions of Rule 23, I. (f).

3. Such resolutions, after being prepared by the Executive Committee, shall be included in the Report to Congress, or may be sent out separately to societies members of the Union, to be handed by them to the delegates appointed to represent them at Congress.

4. Amendments to such resolutions, or to the Report of the Central Board, may be moved at Congress, if sent in to the General Secretary by a society not less than ten clear days next before the first sitting of the Congress ; or, if handed in to the Standing Orders Committee, in writing, signed by five delegates, representing five different societies, not later than five o'clock in the afternoon on the Saturday preceding the first day of Congress. An amendment to the Report of the Central Board may be in the form of a "reference back" of any section, or part of a section, of such Report, notwithstanding that the remainder of the Report may be adopted.

5. Resolutions may be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee not later than 12 o'clock noon on the first day of Congress. They must be submitted by delegates from five societies (duly authorised in writing under the hands of the secretaries of the respective societies they represent to submit same, and such authorities must be dated and produced to the Standing Orders Committee). The Standing Orders Committee can, at their discretion, refuse to accept any resolution, and shall refuse to accept a resolution unless it relates either

(a) to business included on the agenda sent out to societies as Congress business, or (b) to business of such a nature that the Standing Orders Committee have no doubt that it is one that Congress should entertain, and that it is urgent and cannot be delayed.

6. All resolutions or amendments received by the Standing Orders Committee, in accordance with Clauses 4 and 5, shall be read out to the Congress at the close of the morning sitting, and also displayed in a place accessible to all delegates.

7. Whenever an amendment is made upon any motion, no second amendment shall be taken into consideration until the first amendment is disposed of. If an amendment be carried it shall then become the substantive motion.

8. The mover of an original motion shall have the right of reply upon the original motion or upon one amendment, and the mover of an amendment which has become the substantive motion shall have a similar right of reply. The right of reply shall be exercised only after the discussion has closed and, subsequently, no further debate shall be allowed on the question. No member shall speak more than once on the same motion or amendment except in the exercise of this right of reply, and no new matter shall be introduced by the mover in reply.

9. Any debate may be closed by a resolution, "That the question be now put," being moved, seconded, and carried, such resolution to be put to the meeting without debate; but no speech shall be interrupted for the purpose of proposing such a motion. No card vote shall be taken on such motion. Where an amendment is under discussion the motion shall apply only to that amendment, and shall not be taken on the main question until all amendments have been disposed of, unless the chairman is of opinion that the time has come when the main question may be fairly put.

10. A resolution for the adjournment of any question may be moved by a delegate in a speech not exceeding three minutes, and if the motion be seconded, it shall be seconded without a speech, and put by the chairman without debate.

11. When the chairman rises to speak, delegates shall immediately take their seats, and any delegate who shall wilfully disregard the ruling of the chair after due warning, or shall be guilty of grossly disorderly conduct in interrupting the proceedings of Congress, shall be immediately suspended from further attendance at Congress.

12. The decision of the chairman on any point shall be final.

13. When an extension of time is allowed to a speaker such extension shall not be for more than five minutes at a time.

14. All resolutions shall be put to the vote by a show of delegates' attendance cards. A card vote shall be taken only on the demand of 100 delegates.

15. Such number of tellers as may be required shall be appointed by Congress at the first business sitting.

16. No motion to suspend a Standing Order for the purpose of altering the order of business for the discussion of any particular subject shall be received, unless notice has been given in writing by not less than 20 delegates, each representing a separate society, and announced by the chairman before the close of the previous session. The motion to suspend the Standing Orders shall be put to the vote after it has been moved and formally seconded, and not more than one speech made in opposition. Should a motion to suspend a Standing Order relate to business occurring during the final session of Congress, it shall thereupon be submitted to the Congress. To suspend the Standing Orders the motion must be approved by a three-fourths majority on a card vote, and should such motion be defeated, no second motion to suspend the Standing Orders for the purpose of discussing the same subject shall be permitted.

17. All resolutions sent in by society-members of the Union in accordance with Rule 23, clause I. (f), shall be submitted to Congress as definite resolutions with any amendment or amendments to same, that may be sent in in accordance with the provisions of Clause 4 and 5 above, unless the society (or societies) concerned has consented to the adoption of some other course.

18. The President's Inaugural Address shall not exceed thirty minutes in delivery.

19. The time allowed for reading a paper, or making any speech, other than the opening address, shall not, except by consent of the Congress, exceed the following limits :—

Any paper	...	...	...	...	30 minutes.
A reply by the writer of a paper	...	...	...	10	„
Any speech in discussion	...	...	...	5	„
Any speech moving a resolution or amendment of which notice has been given	...	...	...	10	„
A reply by the mover of any resolution	...	...	...	5	„

- 20.** The Executive Committee of the Co-operative Union shall recommend to the Standing Orders Committee the time which they consider should be allowed to the mover of a report to Congress, except in the case of the Reports of the Joint Propaganda and Trade Committee, the Joint Parliamentary Committee, the Co-operative Party, and the International Co-operative Alliance, for the moving of which ten minutes shall be permitted.
- 21.** The proposer and seconder of the Vote of Thanks at the conclusion of Congress shall be allowed five and three minutes respectively.
- 22.** Resolutions submitted either by the Central Board or by societies shall be discussed immediately following the portion of the Reports to which, in the opinion of the Standing Orders Committee, they relate.
- 23.** General resolutions which, in the opinion of the Standing Orders Committee do not deal with any subject matter of the Report, shall be discussed after the adoption of the Report of the Central Board.
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337—*Summary of Chapter Eleven*

Divided into four sections (a) general observations, (b) local conferences, (c) national, and (d) international. Conferences differ from public meetings. Composed of delegates who come to confer. Suitable arrangements necessary for hall, bell, water, tables for committee, press and, where large conferences lasting days, rostrum and microphone.

(b) Local conferences initiated locally or by headquarters. First decisions on subject, date, speakers, chairman, hall and stewards. Notice despatched inviting delegates and stating business. Delegates sent credentials which they hand to stewards. Chairman shows time-tables to speakers, opens with brief remarks, secretary makes announcements, Chairman calls on speakers, announces questions and discussion. Speakers reply to questions. Discussion opened with time limits. Speakers reply at end. Motion put and meeting closes.

(c) National conference illustrated by Trades Union Congress. Opening address of President, General Purposes Committee announces arrangements for Agenda and composite motions. Union dissenting can insist on own motion being put separately. Discussion opens on General Council's Report. Chairman formally moves paragraphs. Speakers limited to five minutes. Questions asked, replied to, and reference back may be moved. Council member replies, vote taken, either by voices, show of hands or cards, tellers counting votes. Some motions taken as amendments to report if they affect subject matter. Others moved separately. Officers elected by secret ballot, counted by scrutineers. Minutes taken, read each day and verbatim report published.

(d) International. Description of Conference, Geneva. Composed of delegations. Each country entitled to four delegates; two Government, one workers and one employers, assisted by technical advisers. Separate groups meet to consult on policy. Conference controlled by Governing Body appointed by these groups. Credentials of delegates checked by committee. Procedure similar to British, but movers of *amendments* may speak twice. If closure carried, one speaker for each group permitted before final vote. Voting usually by record. Electric sign shows yes, no, or abstain. Delegates only vote, and recommendation or convention requires two-thirds majority. Translations made simultaneously by telephone system.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Paragraphs 338-363

Public Meetings

Describes how public meetings are organised and controlled, stresses the need for preparation and advertisement, not forgetting the gentlemen of the press. Advises Chairman to be brief, and not to embarrass his speakers by eulogy. Tells how to handle questions. Then from indoors goes to outdoor propaganda meetings, listens in at Hyde Park and finishes up at a demonstration.

338—*Practice Makes Perfect*

The duties of the Chairman at public meetings call for special consideration. It is not everyone who can face a large audience at a public meeting and conduct the proceedings with assurance and efficiency. Some Chairmen who would feel quite at home in the branch or lodge room, seeing the same faces more or less regularly from meeting to meeting, might feel a bit nervous about facing a large audience. Practice, however, makes perfect and, given adequate preparation, no Chairman need feel unduly apprehensive. If the Chairman has had the advantage of presiding at regular branch or committee meetings, he will be broken in pretty well. The technical side of his functions need not worry him at all. They are simple and straightforward. No matter what the type of public meeting, the principles are the same as those to which he has become accustomed at smaller meetings.

339—*The Need for Preparation*

Whether a public meeting is to be a success or not, depends very greatly on the thoroughness of the preparations made for it. It is not the Chairman's responsibility to undertake these himself, but he would do well to make sure they have been carried out. Let us see what these preparations involve. Suppose the local Labour Party desire to hold a public meeting to protest against a rise in the cost of living. The first step would be, in all probability, to appoint a sub-committee consisting of the Chairman, Secretary, and one or two other members to make the necessary arrangements. They would then have to determine who was to preside, whether the Chairman of the Party or some other member. It is not essential that whoever is chosen to preside should be a member of the sub-committee, but unless he had done the job

before and was of proved mettle, he would be handicapped in not being in on the arrangements from the beginning.

340—*Appointing the Chairman*

The normal procedure would be to appoint the Chairman of the local Party to take the chair at the public meeting, and we shall assume that this has been done. He would preside over the meetings of the sub-committee which would then determine the date and place of the proposed meeting. A bit of latitude on both of these points is sometimes necessary, as it is not always easy to secure a hall just at the time it is required. Then again, speakers have to be chosen and, if they are prominent men actively engaged in public work, it may be difficult for them to fit in with the date. Their convenience would have to be considered. So that the early decisions on these points would have to be more or less provisional. It would be advisable to suggest several alternative dates, and in writing both to the proprietors of the hall and the speakers, to keep a number of these dates open until the arrangements were finally concluded.

341—*Arranging Speakers*

As to the number of speakers who should be invited to take part, much would depend upon the occasion. For election meetings, particularly towards the end of a campaign, as speakers usually do more than one meeting during the same evening, it is always advisable to secure a number of speakers. On other occasions, too, it may be advisable to invite several. Expense has to be borne in mind somewhat in these matters, as if some of the speakers were required to come from other towns and to stay away from home all night, their travelling fares and out-of-pocket expenses would probably have to be met from local funds.

342—*Advertising the Meeting*

Whilst it is, no doubt, attractive to have several prominent names upon a poster or handbill, we cannot help feeling that it is not always conducive to the best results. It does not do to overload the platform with speakers, as this results in scrappiness and sometimes repetition. As a rule, it would probably be found better to have not more than one or two principal speakers, apart from those who deal with formal matters, such as votes of thanks. The advertising of the meeting is most important. The most eloquent of speakers can't attract a crowd unless the people know when and where they are to be heard. Much will depend upon the financial resources of the body promoting the meeting as to the extent to which they can advertise. Posters on the public hoardings and advertisements in the local newspapers are usually expensive. The printing of handbills would be less costly but not so effective, unless really adequate arrangements for their distribution were made. If the funds permit, all three methods should be used.

343—*Preparing the Motion*

All this decided upon, the sub-committee would focus its attention upon drawing up an appropriate motion expressing the view of the Party on the subject. Perhaps something on these lines would be found appropriate :—

“That this meeting of citizens of Slushton expresses apprehension at the continued increase in the cost of living, and calls upon the Government to take more adequate steps to control all essential foodstuffs sold to the people.”

Having reached this stage and the Secretary having received replies from the speakers announcing willingness to attend, the sub-committee would proceed to draw up a rough Agenda. This would contain the names of the speakers, the order in which they were

to address the meeting and the length of time to be allotted to each, in addition to making provision for such local announcements as were necessary.

344—*The Agenda*

The Agenda would look something like this :—

Meeting to start at 7.30 p.m. prompt.

- (1) 7.30 p.m. to 7.40 p.m. ... Chairman's Remarks.
- (2) 7.40 p.m. to 8 p.m. ... Motion moved by
Councillor J. Ranter.
- (3) 8 p.m. to 8.15 p.m. ... Motion seconded by
Mr. R. Glibley, J.P.
- (4) 8.15 p.m. to 9 p.m. ... Address by Mr. Will
Slangem, M.P.
- (5) 9 p.m. to 9.5 p.m. ... Collection.
- (6) 9.5 p.m. to 9.10 p.m. ... Announcements.
- (7) 9.10 p.m. to 9.25 p.m. ... Questions.
- (8) Motion put to meeting.
- (9) Vote of thanks (if any) to the Chairman and speakers.
- (10) Chairman declares meeting closed.

It is a moot point whether the announcements should be made by the Secretary or the Chairman. We think it preferable that the Secretary who, as usual, has done a good deal of the donkey work in preparing for the meeting, should be given some public part in it. He could prepare the list of announcements and after making sure that nothing important had been omitted, the Chairman would probably feel disposed to leave to the Secretary the making of these to the meeting. The collection is a not unimportant item and a few words of exhortation from the Chairman, spontaneous and stirring in character (but prepared beforehand) should be made, drawing attention to the need for supporting the local Party in their work of educating the public to an understanding of Labour policy.

345—*Completing the Arrangements*

There are a few other matters to attend to. Stewards should be appointed, not only to help the Chairman if necessary to preserve order in the hall itself, but to act as doorkeepers. This latter function is of special importance if admission to the meeting is by ticket. The sub-committee should satisfy themselves, too, that proper provision is made for reporting the meeting in the press. A notification to the local newspapers containing particulars of the meeting and the names of the speakers, would probably result in certain disconsolate looking persons putting in an appearance on the night of the meeting. These would be the "Gentlemen of the Press." It is unreasonable to expect them to twist themselves into shapes which would make a professional contortionist gib, in order that they should be able to take notes of the proceedings. It is far better to provide them with a proper table just in front of the platform or conveniently nearby. Not that they would have the least intention of reporting all that is said. That would be against the ethics of the profession. They know by hard experience how to eliminate the "flim-flam" and the "poppy-cock" from speeches. The sub-committee, having made all these preliminary arrangements and having, as good sub-committees always do have, their reports unanimously adopted by the Executive of the local Party, the Chairman can then comfortably lean back and wait for the fateful day. Not quite perhaps. He has to ponder over the remarks he intends to make during the first ten minutes of the meeting. Even a speech of this short duration, should be thought out in advance and notes made for use at the appropriate time.

346—*Opening the Meeting*

On the night of the meeting, the Chairman and Secretary should make a point of being down early. It may be that some of the stewards have not turned

up, or that the hall-keeper is still in a nearby tavern. There may be no bell on the platform and no water bottle and glasses. Such accidents do happen and have to be provided against. At all events the Chairman would be well advised to assure himself that all arrangements are complete. Besides, he has to meet the speakers and introduce them to the members of the committee and other active members. The Secretary in his letter to the speakers will have given the final arrangements, and told them of the amount of time allotted to them. The Chairman should tactfully assure himself that they understand this. There is nothing more unsatisfactory than speakers exceeding their time, and thus trespassing upon the time of other speakers. It disorganises the time-table completely.

347—*Three Minutes Hint*

It is a most difficult thing for an inexperienced speaker to regulate his speech by the clock. Usually he goes on punching the atmosphere, and entirely forgets all about the time. It is useful for the Chairman to write on a scrap of paper in big letters the words : "THREE MINUTES TO GO." He should warn the speakers before the meeting begins that he will put this notice on the table in front of them, just before their time expires. This gives them enough time in which to round off their remarks, and prevents an abrupt finish. It is a better method than tinkling the bell, as in the latter case the audience might think that the speaker was being closed because he was not making a success of his speech.

348—*Chairman's Brief Remarks*

The Chairman's own remarks should never be prolix. It may be thought that this point is being unduly stressed, but it really is most vital to the success of a meeting that the Chairman should confine himself to a

brief introductory statement. Chairmen sometimes seem to be unable to resist the impulse to make a speech ; as though they were the star performer of the evening. We attended a public meeting in London some years ago, where the Chairman was a well-known M.P. Two speakers of national repute were billed to address the meeting, and as the subject was a very topical one, the audience was naturally impatient to hear them. It might sound incredible, but the fact is that the Chairman took forty minutes ! We were in the balcony waiting, like the rest of the audience, to hear the speakers, and we noticed that on three occasions one of the speakers tried to attract the Chairman's attention to the passing of time by handing him a note. But still the Chairman went on, until the audience manifested its impatience by starting to stamp and clap.

349—*A Long-winded Chairman*

Which reminds us of the story of the Member of Parliament who attended a propaganda meeting in the provinces. The Chairman behaved very much as described above. At long last he wound up his lengthy remarks, and called upon the M.P. to address the meeting. Whereupon the Member of Parliament rose and quietly observed, that as the audience had been treated to such a feast of oratory, he would content himself by moving a vote of thanks to the Chairman ! No Chairman should ever expose himself to such a rebuff. At the opening the Chairman should briefly announce the purpose of the meeting, and should read the motion which is to be submitted and give the names of the various speakers. When he calls upon each speaker to address the audience, he should make a few introductory references to him but should not butter him up too much. Telling an audience who and what a speaker is, helps to hold their interest, but eulogy should not be indulged in. Leave the audience to judge of the speaker's merits.

350—*Handling the Agenda*

In our suggested Agenda we have put the moving and seconding of the motion immediately after the Chairman's remarks, the principal speaker being usually reserved to speak in its support. This order can, of course, be varied and the principal speaker could move the motion if that was desired. We have also set a time apart for the announcements, but often it will be found more convenient to have the announcements made at the same time as the collection is being taken. Certainly it is a bit of an ordeal to have nothing going on while the collection is being taken. The Chairman should always explain its purpose. It is most embarrassing for a speaker to sit on the platform and listen to the audience being urged to subscribe liberally to the collection without any explanation as to what it is for. People might conceivably think that the speaker was the principal cause of the expense, whereas he had probably given his services free. The Chairman should always draw attention to the expense attached to organising meetings, such as the rent of the hall, advertising and such incidental matters.

351—*Question Time*

Provision has also been made for questions. We believe this to be an inherently democratic practice, and it is quite customary at Labour meetings. It is not so usual at the meetings of other political parties and this item can be eliminated if desired. Questions may be either written or verbal. Verbal questions are infinitely to be preferred as they interest the audience, but if a questioner doesn't like getting up and asking his question, he can always hand it in writing to a steward. Sometimes a question will be asked verbally from the front of the hall, and whilst those on the platform hear it perfectly, those at the back may not.

If the speaker proceeds to answer, half the audience may be mystified as to what it is all about. It is a good practice, therefore, for the speaker to paraphrase the question, where there is the slightest doubt about its having been properly heard by all present.

352—*Abusive or Offensive Questions*

If a question is addressed to a particular speaker, he should be allowed to answer it. Offensive or abusive questions ought not to be permitted and the Chairman should put his foot down firmly on this. Some questioners think it is their prerogative to make extended remarks introducing their question, but the Chairman should never allow questions to be developed into speeches. At the same time, some questions would not be intelligible unless a few brief introductory sentences were allowed. If the Chairman finds his indulgence in this respect being abused, he can always insist upon questions being asked more directly. It is a good thing to warn the audience of this when questions are invited. When the questions have been disposed of, the Chairman should read the motion loudly and distinctly so that all can hear, and should straightway take the vote in the ordinary manner by show of hands. He should then announce the result.

353—*Votes of Thanks*

It sometimes happens in one of those bursts of appreciation which occasionally occur at Labour Meetings, that somebody wants to move a vote of thanks to the Chairman. This unexpected event has no need to embarrass the latter. All he has to do is to sit and listen, looking blissfully unconscious of what is happening. The Secretary does the rest. He receives the motion, gets it seconded, and puts it to the meeting without loss of time. The Chairman then

comes out of his trance and responds briefly, assuring the audience he has merely done his duty, and that the best thanks a Chairman can receive is the attention and interest of his audience. He then thanks them, and declares the meeting closed. No general discussion should be allowed, as the whole proceeding is very formal.

354—*Election Meetings*

The procedure at election meetings is very much the same as that outlined above. After the Chairman has made his preliminary remarks, the candidate addresses the meeting, outlining his programme and the principles which he advocates. Sometimes he is preceded by another speaker, but this is entirely a matter of choice. At the close of the addresses, questions are allowed, either written or verbal, and the candidate having answered these or evaded them in the customary manner, a motion should be moved by a sympathiser in the body of the meeting, expressing approval of the candidature, i.e. :—

“That, having heard the address and programme of Mr. Stumpit, this meeting resolves to use every effort in returning him to Parliament.”

(We always speak of *returning* a candidate, although in many cases some of them have never been there, nor are they likely ever to get there). The motion is seconded, and submitted to the meeting, no speeches, other than those of the mover, and seconder, being allowed. It is always advisable to arrange for the mover and seconder of this motion beforehand, and in the event of its being difficult to secure these, the Chairman himself may formally propose and submit the motion. This is very largely a matter of form, as, from our experience, the Chairman (with the exception of Labour meetings, of course,) always declares the motion to be carried, irrespective of how the audience have voted.

355—Outdoor Meetings

The procedure at outdoor public meetings is generally much simpler than at indoor meetings. Usually there is no need whatever to consider such matters as formal motions, amendments, points of order, closure and the many other technicalities of debate. Most outdoor meetings are for propaganda purposes of one kind or another, ranging from simple street-corner meetings to large-scale demonstrations. The platform may be a soap-box, or one specially erected, and the audience may vary from a few people to many thousands. The organisation of outdoor meetings brings its own crop of problems, and only general guidance can be given here. The simplest form of propaganda meeting is that which takes place at the street corner, or on some waste land or open space accessible to the public. The Chingfield branch of the League of Independent Individualists, conscious of its mission to convert the residents of the borough to the cause of independent individualism, may determine to hold a series of outdoor meetings. They select a place where the public are most easily induced to attend, appoint a Chairman and one or two speakers, not forgetting a colleague to take up the collection and another to sell literature, and the arrangements are completed.

356—Propaganda Meeting

On the afternoon or evening selected the Chairman gets up on the soap-box borrowed from a neighbouring shop or, if the League is in the habit of running outdoor meetings, on the small platform they have provided. He proceeds to address the atmosphere for a few minutes, fixing his eyes on space over the heads of two or three of the faithful, who have attended to form the nucleus of the crowd. If the League is very lucky it may possess a portable loud-speaker. In such case there would be no need for the Chairman to rupture his larynx, in an effort to reach

the unheeding multitude beyond. He can speak in moderately loud tones. He will also have the consolation of knowing, that should some interjector attempt to be facetious at the expense of the speakers, his interjections will be smothered by the stentorian retort which will be delivered through the loudspeaker. Soon a crowd will begin to collect. People curious to know what the latest doctrine may involve, will come in their twos and threes until the Chairman, having satisfied himself that the audience is large enough to merit an address from the speakers, will call upon one of them to commence.

357—*Excellent Speaking Practice*

There is probably no finer practice which a young speaker can secure, than that of making an impromptu speech at a small outdoor meeting. So long as he knows his subject well, he needn't trouble in the least about such matters as sequence or phrasing. Every topical instance that comes to his mind can be used, and no one will complain of irrelevance. The crowd will rather enjoy it. The Chairman, too, can gain much valuable experience, as the art of dealing with a miscellaneous collection of curious listeners is an acquired one. Good humour and readiness to take without irritation, the expected heckling from the crowd are the most essential qualities. Outdoor speeches should never be too long, and sustained argument, except on occasions where the attendance of an audience is assured, should not be attempted. Propaganda meetings offer an opportunity for both Chairman and speakers, to work off all the current facts (and a few obsolete ones too) with which they have stuffed their memories. They need have little fear that anyone in the audience will be capable of disputing with them. It is seldom indeed that the unexpected happens and that a listener, either by questions or by interjections, can get the better of a practised speaker.

358—*Collection and Announcements*

The Chairman usually takes the collection when the first speaker has worked up the audience to the requisite pitch of enthusiasm. A world of psychology lies in the proper performance of this. He will probably find it most suitable to make any announcements as to future meetings, and to draw attention to the literature which is on sale, during the process of extracting coppers from the reluctant pockets of the audience. If there is a motion to be presented, it is put in the ordinary way after being moved and seconded by the speakers and after opportunity for asking questions has been given. Amendments should never be invited. It is far too risky.

359—*In Hyde Park*

Everyone who comes to London visits Hyde Park, and stands for a time listening to the orators who from chairs, boxes, and portable platforms, declaim their beliefs and opinions upon every conceivable subject. Let us watch them for a few minutes. Here at the first platform is a clean-shaven, bespectacled man, haranguing the crowd about religion. He stops in full cry, and smiles benevolently at a middle-aged man hidden in the midst of the crowd, who shouts questions at him. Next door, so close that the crowds round the two speakers intermingle, is a secularist who caustically castigates all and sundry for bigotry and superstition. He doesn't lose his temper when half a dozen questions, suggestions, and comments are hurled at him from different sections of his audience. He just waits until he can get a word in.

360—*Medley of Voices*

A little further on is a group of men and women gathered around a man on a chair, who stands beating time whilst his followers sing a hymn. Beyond him

again is a burly, fresh-faced fellow whom we hear in the midst of denouncing capitalism, and most of all the Government, which he describes as the worst since the time of Cromwell. Further on still is another speaker whose message is difficult to comprehend, because of the interruptions of an excited female, whom he tries vainly to admonish with, "Every time I try to have a meeting here some daft woman comes to interrupt." One old fellow delivers the same speech on all possible occasions. His audience know it as well as he does, including his invariable habit of winding up by informing them of his telephone number "to which all enquiries may be made." He shows not the least embarrassment when, on arriving at his well-worn peroration, his audience anticipate him by chanting it in chorus. And so it goes on, the speakers not showing the least trace of self-consciousness, and generally appearing to enjoy themselves immensely. It is scarcely exact to describe such gatherings as public meetings, as any connected discourse is nearly impossible because of the speakers stopping every few minutes to conduct a minor debate with a section of the audience. But there is something to be learned from them all. Sublimely confident that they will eventually convert their listeners, they seem perfectly content to allow indiscriminate interjection and interruption without showing the slightest sign of irritation. They know that if they lose their temper they are done for. Chairmen should remember this also.

361—*Demonstrations*

In a quite different category are demonstrations. These are really public meetings on a grand scale which may or may not be preceded by processions. Usually they are held outdoors so as to permit as large an attendance as possible. Outdoor meetings are always a risky business, and if the weather is

unkind it is nearly impossible to prevent them from becoming a flop. Wherever possible arrangements should be made to hold a meeting or meetings indoors in the event of heavy rain. The organisation of such demonstrations requires a great deal of care and systematic preparation, which it would be beyond the scope of this book to describe. It is enough to say that where very large demonstrations are concerned the preparation may have to commence several months beforehand. Once the preliminary decisions have been taken there is an immense volume of detailed work to organise and supervise. Several platforms may have to be used and for this lorries have to be secured in advance.

362—*Much Detailed Work Involved*

Chairman and speakers have to be engaged, motions have to be drafted, and printed notes for speakers circulated, loudspeaker equipment provided (where permitted), posters and publicity matter designed and displayed. Where processions are also involved contingents have to be organised under specially appointed marshals, bands and banners have to be provided and the exact routes arranged with the police. This list is by no means exhaustive, and is only intended to give an outline of what is necessary. The Chairman's duty on such occasions differs materially from what has been described earlier. His principal job is to make sure that all his speakers are present, to acquaint them with the required length of speeches, to see that the motion is moved and seconded, and finally at the end of the meeting, on hearing a bugle call, or other agreed signal, to put the motion simultaneously with those which are being put from the other platforms. It is almost impossible to allow questions under such circumstances and it is inadvisable to attempt it.

363—*Summary of Chapter Twelve*

Public meetings require careful preparation. Local Party appoint sub-committee and Chairman. Do not overload programme. See that Press are invited and meeting well advertised. Time limits fixed for speakers and Chairman sets example by brevity. Gives speakers three minutes' warning before expiration of time. Avoids eulogising speakers in introducing them. Takes questions, whether written or verbal, but refuses offensive ones. Keeps questioners to the point. Speaker paraphrases questions so that all may hear. Chairman puts motion, receives vote and winds up meeting. At election meetings calls on candidate, then allows questions and puts motion pledging support. Outdoor meetings usually for propaganda. No need to bother about technical procedure. Excellent practice for developing speaking and repartee. Meetings in Hyde Park both amusing and instructive. Demonstrations are big meetings and successful organisation is big job. Where several platforms used still more so. Chairmen, speakers, resolutions, speakers' notes, loudspeakers, posters and visiting bands and contingents have all to be arranged and police consulted about routes if procession held. Chairman makes sure of his speakers and puts motion from platform simultaneously with others.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Paragraphs 364-390

How to Deal With Disorder

Is the only chapter with an unlucky number. But only for interrupters, who should be thoroughly terrified at the penalties which await them if they get nasty. Advises tolerance, but not with organised interruption. Tells what can and what cannot be done to defeat this, with much quotation and analysis of the Public Meeting Act, 1908, and the Public Order Act, 1936.

364—*Chairman Should Be Firm*

The Chairman's primary duty is to preserve order. Ordinarily he will have no difficulty because most people possess a sense of fairness which instinctively makes them respect the authority of the Chairman. This is particularly true of members of organisations whose meetings are regularly held and who, by contract, learn to trust the Chairman. Disorder is very rare at delegate conferences where everyone feels he has some responsibility for maintaining the good name of the society. Most societies, however, take the precaution of giving the Chairman very extensive powers to deal with those who are out deliberately to create trouble. In such cases the Chairman should never hesitate to use his powers by imposing any fines or penalties which the rules provide, but he should always bear in mind that "a soft answer turneth away wrath," and that many a troublesome member can be called to order by conciliatory measures. These should always be tried first, and if they fail the Chairman must adopt firmer measures without fear or favour. Generally the members will be with him, and will support him in doing by stringent methods that which he has failed to do by more lenient ones.

365—*Naming a Member*

At conferences, after persuasion has failed, the Chairman should request the member to withdraw from the meeting. If he refuses to go, or if the Chairman feels that his conduct has been grossly disorderly, he should *name* him. He does this by announcing the member's name loudly so that all may hear, and at the same time requests the Secretary to make a note of the incident. A member who has been named should not be allowed to take any further part in the meeting. If it is a conference he should be reported to the branch of which he is a delegate, for

them to take such disciplinary action as they feel is necessary. The Trades Union Congress Standing Orders provide: "Should any delegate cause any disturbance at any session of Congress, and refuse to obey the President when called to order, he shall be named by the President, and shall be expelled from the hall for the remainder of the session, and shall not be allowed to take part in the Congress proceedings without the consent of Congress." A session in this case means a sitting, so that a delegate who was expelled from a morning session of the conference, might be allowed to return in the afternoon providing he expressed regret for his conduct, and the delegates consented to his returning.

366—Suspension of Members

In the House of Commons any Member whose conduct is disorderly may be required by the Speaker to withdraw. If the offence is a serious one, the Speaker may name the Member and immediately put a motion (which is usually moved by the Leader of the House) to the effect that the Member concerned shall be suspended. If the offence occurs whilst the House of Commons is in Committee, the Chairman reports the matter to the Speaker, who acts as we have described. Suspension lasts for five days for the first offence and twenty days for a second offence. For any subsequent offence the suspension lasts until the House has decided to remove it. No debate or amendment is allowed on this issue. Should a Member refuse to leave, the Sergeant at Arms removes him at the Speaker's request. In the case of grave disorder arising in the House of Commons, the Speaker may adjourn the House or suspend the sitting for a time.

367—Disorder at Public Meetings

As we have said it is unusual for disorder to become serious at regular meetings and conferences of members,

but a rather different situation has to be faced when dealing with public meetings. Let us be clear what we mean by public meetings. The Public Order Act of 1936 defines this as, "... any meeting in a public place and any meeting which the public or any section thereof are permitted to attend, whether on payment or otherwise." This is a broad definition, and would include practically every kind of meeting other than those restricted to members only. It may be that deliberate attempts are made to break up a meeting and to shout down the speakers. The Chairman must be ready to face this.

368—*Dealing with Disorder*

Now let us see what we mean by disorder. Interjecting a remark or a question when a speaker is on his feet cannot properly be called disorder. No one can reasonably object to heckling if it is done with good humour, and does not become so persistent as to disturb the meeting as a whole. If the speaker is worth his salt he ought to be able to deal with heckling effectively. But there is another sort of interruption which is of a quite different character. It might be called the systematic creation of disorder. The writer first came across it in Germany.

369—*Experience in Germany*

The German Social Democratic Party had many bitter experiences of organised attempts to disrupt its proceedings. At its public meetings interruptions took place with great frequency. It was not so much that some single individual got up from his seat and interjected. The interrupters were scattered right throughout the hall. At times as many as a dozen or more would be all shouting out something more or less unintelligible. Then the stewards would take a hand. They would try to put the interrupters out. This was a signal for more disorder and from all parts

of the hall would come yells, cat-calls and abuse hurled at stewards, Chairman and speakers. It soon became plain that this method was developing into a regular tactic employed by hostile and rival political partisans.

370—*Technique of Disruption*

Of course, the inevitable ensued. There were free-fights between the stewards and the interrupters. Whoever got the better of these, the immediate purpose of the interjectors was secured as the meeting was seriously disturbed. These tactics became so stereotyped that the organisers of the meetings had to take special precautions and organise their stewards into what in effect were regular corps, trained and qualified to deal with interrupters. Such tactics have never been carried to the same lengths in this country (although the suffragettes employed them fairly fully), but organised opposition is far from being unknown. The shouting of slogans in chorus is a favourite device by which a comparatively small number of persons can disrupt a meeting.

371—*Adjournment Because of Disorder*

If the disorder assumes such proportions that the Chairman deems it necessary to adjourn the meeting, he can do so forthwith. He doesn't require anyone to move the adjournment. He simply acts on his own responsibility. The adjournment may be for an indefinite period, or, if the Chairman considers it possible that order will be restored shortly, he may adjourn for half an hour or so, or any other period he thinks fit. But an adjournment may play right into the hands of the disruptionists, who don't in the least mind other people being deprived of the speeches they came to hear.

372—*Decisive Action Needed*

As soon as a Chairman observes such tendencies he should appeal to the audience's sense of fair play and use all his persuasive powers to secure order. If persuasion proves unsuccessful then the Chairman should use the authority vested in him and have the interrupter or interrupters ejected. Such people don't wish to hear the speaker's argument. Their purpose is to make trouble and the Chairman would be foolish to allow them to get away with it. If it becomes clear that the interruption is organised, and that the stewards are not able to control it without the proceedings degenerating into a brawl, the Chairman should without hesitation call in the police. Distasteful as such a procedure is, any Chairman is fully entitled to do this if the circumstances, in his opinion, necessitate it.

373—*The Olympia Meeting*

The classic illustration of this was provided by the Fascist meeting which was held at Olympia in 1936. According to newspaper reports there was considerable interruption, some of which appeared to have been organised. Fighting broke out between some of the stewards and members of the audience, several of whom claimed to have been completely innocent of any intent to disrupt the proceedings. One result of the Olympia meeting was to concentrate attention on the law dealing with disturbance at public meetings. It was felt that the Public Meeting Act, 1908, needed strengthening. The gist of that Act is that any person who acts or incites others to act in a disorderly manner at a lawful public meeting, for the purpose of preventing the transaction of the business for which the meeting was called together, shall on conviction be liable to a fine of five pounds or one month's imprisonment. If the offence occurs at a Parlia-

mentary Election, between the time the writ is issued and the declaration of the poll, the offender is liable to be punished under the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1880. Penalties under this Act are fines up to one hundred pounds and disenfranchisement for five years.

374—Defect of the 1908 Act

The weakness of the Public Meeting Act of 1908, was that it required proof not only of disorderly conduct on the part of the offender, but also proof that his object was to prevent the meeting from transacting its business. This might not be easy to secure on all occasions. But even if proof were forthcoming, it would be first necessary to *identify* the interrupter. It is impossible to charge a person with an offence, unless the identity of that person is known. The technique of disruption has on occasions gone so far that persons from other parts of the country have been *imported* to cause interruption. If such a person, who was unknown to the Chairman or the organisers of the meeting, acted in a disorderly manner they might have great difficulty in finding out who he was and where he lived. Without that knowledge he could not be brought into court, as no one could be *arrested* for an offence under the Public Meeting Act, 1908.

375—Loopholes Stopped Up

These loopholes have now been stopped up by the Public Order Act which was passed in December 1936. Every Act of Parliament is first introduced in the form of a Bill which is divided into paragraphs. These paragraphs are called clauses, and some of them are divided into sub-paragraphs or sub-clauses as they are called. The clauses and sub-clauses are always numbered. When a Bill has gone through all

its stages in Parliament, it becomes an Act. The paragraphs are no longer called clauses, but are then known as sections. Just as the clauses of a Bill become sections of an Act of Parliament, so the sub-clauses become sub-sections. Thus we speak of section (1) sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) as the case may be.

The Public Order Act prohibits the wearing of political uniforms, gives the police power to control processions, and punishes the carrying of offensive weapons. So far as public meetings are concerned, it did *two* important things. First, it added a new sub-section, viz., sub-section (3) to section (1) of the Public Meeting Act, 1908. Secondly, by section (5) it made it a general offence to *use threatening, abusive, or insulting behaviour, at a public meeting whereby a breach of the peace might be caused.*

376—Public Meeting Act Strengthened

Now let us see how the new sub-section which has been added to the Public Meeting Act, 1908, appears when read in conjunction with section (1)² of that Act.

SECTION (1)

(1) Any person who at a lawful public meeting acts in a disorderly manner for the purpose of preventing the transaction of the business for which the meeting was called together shall be guilty of an offence, and, if the offence is committed at a political meeting held in any parliamentary constituency between the date of the issue of a writ for the return of a member of Parliament for such constituency and the date at which a return to such writ is made, he shall be guilty of an illegal practice within the meaning of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883, and in any other case shall, on summary conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding five pounds, or to imprisonment not exceeding one month.

SECTION (2)

(2) Any person who incites others to commit an offence under this section shall be guilty of a like offence.

NEW SUB-SECTION (3)

(3) *If any constable reasonably suspects any person of committing an offence under the foregoing provisions of this section, he may if requested so to do by the Chairman of the meeting require that person to declare to him immediately his name and address and, if that person refuses or fails so to declare his name and address or gives a false name and address he shall be guilty of an offence under this sub-section and liable on summary conviction thereof to a fine not exceeding forty shillings, and if he refuses or fails so to declare his name and address or if the constable reasonably suspects him of giving a false name and address, the constable may without warrant arrest him.*

377—What the Law Contemplates

We see from this that the sequence of events contemplated by these sections is,

- (1) Some person or persons must act in a *disorderly* manner.
- (2) Their object must be to prevent the meeting from *transacting its business*.
- (3) The interrupter must be disorderly himself or incite others to become disorderly.
- (4) The police must be requested to act by the Chairman.
- (5) They are empowered to demand the offender's name and address.
- (6) If a person refuses he may be arrested and fined 40s.
- (7) If he is suspected of giving a false name and address he may be arrested.
- (8) If the particulars given prove false he may be fined 40s.

378—Refusal to Give Name

We see under this new section that the Public Meeting Act of 1908 now enables the Chairman to call upon the police to take the offender's name and address. If the offender refuses, the police may arrest him at once. If he gives particulars which the police suspect to be false, they may arrest him. In such an event the offender would be taken to the police station, charged with the offence and brought before the court, which

has power to fine him up to 40s. If the police do not suspect the genuineness of the particulars, but these subsequently prove to be false, the offender would probably be summoned to appear before the court, or he might be arrested. So really what the additional sections do is to ensure that the offender can be located and brought before the court.

379—Penalties on Interrupters

We see therefore that the 1908 Act, as now amended, provides penalties for two kinds of offence: (1) the refusal to give name and address or attempting to give a false name and address, and (2) the disorderly conduct itself. The penalty for the first is possible arrest and a fine of 40s. What is the penalty for the second? Let us assume that the offender had given a genuine name and address, what would happen then? Could the police prosecute him for the offence of *acting in a disorderly manner for the purpose of preventing the transaction of business*? The answer is "yes." Either the police or the Chairman or the organisers of the meeting could do so. Whether the police would prosecute would depend on the degree of gravity with which they viewed the offence. The law of the matter was stated in the House of Commons by Sir John Simon, then Home Secretary, himself an eminent lawyer, and who was no doubt speaking with the full concurrence of his legal advisers.

380—Police May Prosecute

There had been some discussion concerning the undesirability of the police being expected to prosecute, in case that would incur suspicions of political bias. For some time the Government were reluctant to provide that anyone other than the Chairman or organisers of the meeting could start proceedings. The general feeling of the House was, however, that

the police could not escape this responsibility, and Sir John Simon finally concurred. He said: "If the case is a flagrant, outrageous case, which the police can properly regard as raising a public matter, no doubt they will prosecute; but if, on the other hand, it is a case which the police, after investigation and consideration, think to be a minor matter, I wish to give the plainest possible notice here that my conception of the wording of this Bill is that it will be for the promoters of the meeting to take their proper responsibility."

381—New Offences Under 1936 Act

The maximum penalty would be a fine of £5, or one month's imprisonment. If, however, the offence occurred at an election meeting the fine could range up to £100, and the offender could be struck off the voting register for five years. These penalties relate only to the offences under the 1908 Act. But there are other offences and penalties to consider. Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1936 makes general another offence and adds other penalties. It is now punishable by fine or imprisonment to use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour at any public meeting *whereby a breach of the peace is intended or is likely to be caused.*

382—Penalties for Breach of the Peace

The words we have italicised are important. No power of arrest is vested in the police where the offence is merely that of disorderly conduct *for the purpose of preventing the transaction of business.* But if the police had reason to fear that there would be *a breach of the peace*, because of some person using threatening, abusive, or insulting language or behaviour at any public meeting, they could at once arrest him. It makes no difference in this respect whether the

meeting is indoors or outdoors. For such offence the penalties are much heavier than those imposed under the 1908 Act. It is now laid down by section 7, sub-section 2 of the Public Order Act, 1936, that a person guilty of such an offence may be fined £50, or be imprisoned for three months, or both. From what has been said it will be seen that the *penalties* for causing disturbance at public meetings *depend on the nature* of the disorder, and the *intention* of the interrupters—an attempt perhaps to make the “punishment fit the crime.”

383—*Police and Ejection*

It should be remembered that in the case of meetings held on private premises, whether in a public hall or any other building, the audience are there by permission of the conveners. The Public Order Act defines *private premises* as premises to which the public have access only by permission of the owner, occupier or lessee. It doesn't matter whether the audience have paid for admission or whether admission is free. Permission for them to be present can be withdrawn by the Chairman at any time, and he can request any person to leave the meeting. If a person to whom such a request is made refuses to leave, he becomes a trespasser and may be removed. The duty of removing him normally rests upon the stewards, and they are entitled to use reasonable force in putting him out if he resists. If the interruption has been sufficiently serious, the Chairman would be well advised first to warn those present of the powers vested in him by the law, and then to request the stewards to obtain the name and address of each interrupter. If he refuses, then the Chairman should call in the police and request them to obtain these particulars. If the offender still refuses the police will arrest him.

384—*Order to Leave Meeting*

If he gives a proper name and address the Chairman should then, if he feels it necessary, request him to leave the meeting. If the offender doesn't do so, the Chairman should instruct the stewards to remove him. If the offender refuses to go out quietly, struggles with the stewards, and the incident shows signs of developing into a free fight (or in other words if a breach of the peace appears imminent), the offender may then be given into the custody of the police, or the police may intervene on their own authority. The main job of the police is to prevent a breach of the peace, and if they anticipate this, even though the meeting is held on private premises, they do not become trespassers if they disobey a request to leave. In other words they can stay as long as they like providing they have reasonable grounds to fear a breach of the peace.

385—*Ejection from Outdoor Meetings*

The right of the Chairman of a public meeting to invoke the aid of the police for the *removal* of persons causing disturbance, depends upon whether the meeting is held on private premises or in a place where any member of the public has *right* of access. Mere interjections or questions at an outdoor meeting would not entitle the Chairman to request the person concerned to leave the meeting. He has as much right in a public place as the Chairman or anyone else. This does not mean, however, that he is entitled to kick up a disturbance. That is covered by the general law which we have cited earlier. But whereas the Chairman of a meeting *on private premises* is at liberty at any time, even if there has been no disorder, to request any person to leave the meeting, he has no such right at a meeting on a public highway, or other *public place*.

386—*Home Office Statement*

This is made clear by a statement of the Home Office which was published in the *Times* of 12th October, 1937:—

“In the case of an outdoor meeting held in a place where any member of the public has right of access, no question of ejection can arise, and a person cannot be removed unless he is guilty of conduct in respect of which the law empowers his arrest without warrant. While, therefore, it is the duty of the police to take such steps as may be necessary to prevent breaches of peace, this duty does not necessarily involve the removal of the interrupters, and it is not part of the business of the police to secure a hearing for speakers at meetings.”

It should be noted that the Home Office statement does not mean that the police should remain inactive, while breaches of the peace are committed or are threatened by interrupters at outdoor meetings. It merely emphasises the point that interruption by itself is *not necessarily* a breach of the peace.

387—*Reluctance to Use Powers*

It is apparent that the Chairman has a good deal of legal power to check disorder. Whether he exercises it or not is a matter for his discretion. No one else can. Neither the Secretary nor the speakers who may have been abused can do anything about it. The Law rightly assumes that the Chairman is there to protect them and everyone else who is in the meeting. Undoubtedly, there is some hesitation on the part of Chairmen to bring in the police. They feel there is something repugnant about it. They may think it humiliating thus to confess publicly that they cannot themselves preserve order.

388—*Chairman's Plain Duty*

But surely, there is another side to this. We are here considering *organised* interruption. True, the same penalties apply to *one* person as would apply to a number, but the interruptions of a single individual

are in a quite different category from organised obstruction and uproar. One person can be dealt with by the stewards, but where there are several it raises a different issue. Is freedom of speech to be sacrificed to shield rowdies from the consequences of their conduct? If several people come with the deliberate intention of breaking up a meeting which others have organised with much trouble and expense, are they to escape scot free? A little reflection will show that, distasteful as it may be, the wisest course is to bring in the police when appeals to reason have failed. It is far better to do this than to turn the meeting into a dog-fight, and its effects are likely to be more salutary than any other treatment.

389—Incitement From Platform

We have assumed throughout that disorder and the danger of a breach of the peace has come from the audience, but there are speakers and Chairmen who themselves are so provocative that their conduct may bring them within the arm of the law. They may deliberately incite an audience to a breach of the peace by themselves using insulting and abusive language. Let such people remember that the law applies equally to them as to their hearers. If they really want an orderly meeting, it is for them to set an example by treating their audience with respect, tolerance and good humour. Stewards, too, should not be aggressive. They should never eject an interrupter without the authority of the Chairman. If they see a member of the audience behaving badly, they should quietly warn him. If the Chairman orders that he be put out, the stewards should never use more force than is necessary. Otherwise they expose themselves to an action for assault.

390—Summary of Chapter Thirteen

To preserve order try persuasion first. If this fails act firmly. If disorder occurs at a delegate conference, Chairman should *name* the member who must withdraw. Not allowed to return without an apology. In the House of Commons Members suspended first time for five days, second time twenty days and third time until House removes the suspension. Heckling and reasonable interjection at public meetings are not disorder. Organised and systematic interruptions must be stopped. New technique encountered first in Germany. To adjourn, plays into hands of interrupters. When persuasion fails Chairman should call in police. Better than free fight with stewards. Olympia meeting demonstrated this, and caused strengthening of law. Public Meeting Act, 1908 already provided penalties for disorder but no means of identifying interrupters. Loopholes stopped up by Public Order Act, 1936. This, among other things, added new sub-section to Public Meeting Act 1908, (1) giving police power to take names of interrupters and arrest in default, and (2) making general offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour at a public meeting, whereby a breach of the peace is intended or is likely to be caused. Refusal of name and address or giving false particulars maximum fine 40s. Penalties for disorderly conduct itself depend on kind of disorder:— (a) If for the purpose of preventing the transaction of business, but unlikely to lead to breach of peace, fine £5 or one month. If occurs at election time, fine £100 and struck off voting register for five years. (b) *If conduct intended or likely to lead to breach of peace*, fine £50 or 3 months or both. If disorder serious Chairman warns those present. Then requests stewards obtain names and addresses. If refusal calls in police who take names. If, when requested to leave meeting on private premises, interrupter refuses and struggles with stewards, police may arrest him. Either police or promoters of meeting may prosecute. Persons cannot be ejected from outdoor meetings in public place, but if conduct might lead to breach of peace may be arrested. Incitement from platform or stewards equally punishable.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Paragraphs 391-418

Points of Order and Conduct of Members

Deals with those irritating things—points of order. Tries to show how and when they should be put. Warns the Chairman to be watchful to ensure that speaker's time is not encroached upon by tricks ; tells how Chairman's ruling may be challenged, what speeches are permissible, and that the right of reply is only a privilege after all. Finally shows how the standing orders may be suspended.

391—*Breaches of Order*

Perhaps the most difficult part of a Chairman's work is in dealing with points of order. Seldom does a meeting pass without half a dozen people jumping up on points of order. Particularly is this true of mass meetings. At a meeting we attended recently, a speaker had said something very controversial. Instantly several speakers bounced up in different parts of the hall, bawling in various keys, "A point of order, Mr. Chairman!" "A point of order!" "What is your point of order?" asked the Chairman. "The speaker is not telling the truth," shouted one of the interjectors. "That is not a point of *order*," returned the Chairman. "That is a point of *disorder*." And so it was, and so are the majority of such. The vast majority of interjections on points of order have absolutely nothing whatever to do with order. The fact that a speaker may make a statement which some other member does not consider correct does not constitute a *breach of order* on the speaker's part, and does *not* entitle another member to intervene. He may answer that later (if he has not already spoken) in the ordinary course of the debate.

392—*What is a Point of Order ?*

Points of order must deal with the *conduct* or procedure of the debate. The member rising to put the point of order must prove one or more of the following : (a) That the speaker is travelling outside the scope of the question, (b) that he is using unparliamentary language, (c) that he is transgressing some rule of the society, or (d) that he is infringing the standing orders, or in the absence of standing orders, is acting contrary to the general custom of debate.

393—*When to Put a Point*

A point of order may be put to the Chairman even when a member is not speaking. It is permissible to ask a question regarding procedure at any time.

For instance, the interjector may desire to ask the effect of a motion under discussion, on some other motion which is later to come forward. Or he may desire to ascertain the order in which an amendment will be taken, or, in fact, anything connected with the routine of the meeting. These all come under the general term, points of order. Even when the vote is being taken, a point may be submitted, but it must be on something arising out of the taking of the vote. At that late stage it cannot be of a merely general character. When a member is speaking on a subject, the member who interrupts him by raising a point of order must prove that an irregularity has been committed. Points of correction are not points of order, and should not be allowed except in extreme circumstances.

394—*Frivolous Points*

If the Chairman finds a member continually rising on frivolous points, he should check this firmly, because nothing is calculated to disturb the progress of a meeting so much as trifling interruptions. Most members who put points of order rise with a great air of authority, and are most insistent that they be listened to. It seldom occurs to them that the Chairman probably understands his business a good deal better than they understand their imaginary point of order.

395—*How to Put a Point of Order*

Members desiring to raise a point of order must do so *immediately* the alleged breach has occurred, and must address themselves directly to the Chairman and not to the member who has been interrupted. It is no use a person rising on a breach of order that has taken place some considerable time previously. In putting a point of order, the interjector must not make anything like a speech. The point

of order must be put in the form of a question. It is usually prefaced by, "Mr. Chairman, is it in order to—" (here follows the point of order.)

396—*Point Put Briefly*

Brevity and directness are the soul of points of order. Speeches are taboo. George Bernard Shaw depicts in *Man and Superman* a meeting of brigands. "A point of order," says one of the gang. "No fear," says the Chairman, "your last point of order took half an hour." This is typical. Not infrequently we have heard a speaker get up on an alleged point of order and proceed to an oration on some abstraction, until the Chairman extinguished him.

397—*Time Allowed on Points of Order*

There is another point to consider. The standing orders usually strictly limit the time of every speaker. Therefore, every time an interrupter brings forward a point of order, he encroaches on the time of the speaker who was addressing the meeting. The latter is probably glancing impatiently at the clock, conscious that the time allotted to him is fleeting past, while the discussion between the interrupter and the Chairman is taking place. Points of order are sometimes raised with the deliberate object of disturbing the speaker's train of thought, and of depriving him of the opportunity of properly presenting his case.

398—*No Interference with Speaker's Time*

The speaker should resume his seat as soon as the point of order is raised, and take note of the time occupied by it. When the point is settled he should ask the Chairman to allow him a due amount of extra time. Thus, if he starts to speak at 8 p.m., and the

rule allows him ten minutes to put his case, he would normally finish at 8-10. If, however, interruptions took four minutes, and the speaker had still to finish at 8-10, he would have actually spoken for six minutes only, instead of ten. It would be the Chairman's duty to allow him to continue until 8-14 p.m., the speaker thus getting his full ten minutes.

399 — *Points of Explanation*

Sometimes unscrupulous debaters will so distort or misquote the remarks of a previous speaker that the latter cannot contain himself in quietness. Or there may be a genuine misapprehension as to what a speaker actually said. In such cases the misunderstood speaker would rise with, "May I make a point of explanation, Mr. Chairman?" The Chairman may then allow him to explain in a few words what he actually said or meant. Often members want to go further, and want to explain the remarks of a previous speaker, although they themselves have already had their say. This cannot be permitted. It is the function of the member whose remarks are involved, to explain, if any explanation is required. Further, it should be remembered that points of explanation should be allowed only in extreme cases. Otherwise, speakers will be jumping up every few minutes to say something which they had forgotten to say when it was their turn to speak. A point of explanation may (by the courtesy of the Chairman) be allowed, even though there is no motion before the meeting. No controversial statement, however, can be allowed.

400 — *Rights as to Speaking*

In open meeting a member has one speech only on any question, unless the standing orders say otherwise. The only exception is the mover of an original motion who is generally allowed to reply. Length of speeches

should be strictly limited by the standing orders. An amendment raises a separate question, and any member may speak thereon, even though he has already spoken on the original motion or on a previous amendment. Usually disputants have too much sense to avail themselves of a second speech and thus irritate their listeners into hostility. As already stated, a member may rise on a point of explanation by the Chairman's permission, but must not develop a second speech.

401—*Going Into Committee*

There are occasions, particularly when a technical subject is being discussed, when it would be impossible to adhere strictly to the rule of one speech only. There are two ways of getting over this difficulty: (1) By suspending the standing order which limits the number of speeches, and (2) by moving: "That the meeting conduct the business in Committee." The latter method is adopted in the House of Commons on certain occasions when a Bill is being considered. In such cases a speaker is not restricted to one speech only. He may speak as often as he can "get the floor," but nevertheless the Chairman should take care that the discussion is not monopolised by voluble individual members.

402—*Speaking in Opposition*

When a speaker rises to address the meeting, he usually prefaces his remarks by saying: "I rise to speak in support of the motion," or "I rise to speak against the motion,"—or amendment—as the case may be. This gives a clear indication to the members of his point of view, and helps them to follow the remainder of his remarks better. A member who does not agree with a proposition which is before the meeting may adopt several courses:

(a) He may speak directly against it, (b) he may move an amendment, or (c) try to get rid of it by moving the "previous question," or the "next business," the "adjournment of the debate," or the "adjournment of the meeting." A member moving any of these motions must not have taken part in the discussion previously.

403—All Speeches Must Be Relevant

All speeches must be relevant to the subject, and the speaker must not stray from his point like the law student in "Sketches by Boz," who rose to propose the health of the secretary of the picnic party. As Dickens put it: "The young gentleman, who was a member of a debating society, took this opportunity of entering into an examination of the state of the English Law, from the days of William the Conqueror down to the present period. He briefly adverted to the code established by the Ancient Druids, slightly glanced at the principles laid down by the Athenian law-givers, and concluded with a most glowing eulogium on picnics and constitutional rights." Our Chairman must be on the look-out for such gentlemen, who, with their heads full of some subject, however remote, are determined to get it into the discussion. The golden rule for speakers is: "Don't speak because you *have* to say something, but because you have *something* to say."

404—Tiresome Repetitions

If the Chairman considers the speaker is straying from the point, or indulging in tiresome repetition, he should call the speaker's attention to this. If the speaker still persists in wandering, the Chairman should again warn him, and, if necessary, should "rule him out of order," and make him resume his seat. It is not always easy to judge when a speaker is straying from the point, and the Chairman must be careful to avoid injustice.

405—*The Authority of the Chairman*

Here we come to the vexed question: Should the Chairman's ruling be final and not open to question, or should he be subject to the decisions of the meeting on the point? In other words, should the Chairman rule the meeting or the meeting rule the Chairman? Practically every author who deals with the point at all seems to take the settled view that the Chairman's ruling is final. We agree with this as it applies to matters of order or procedure, but there are some matters of such vital importance that they should not be left to the unbridled will of the Chairman. He should be given as much power as he can safely exercise, but he must not be allowed to become autocratic or unreasonable. In our view the final authority must always rest with the *members*. Still, the Chairman must be protected, and must not be in danger of having his ruling questioned every few minutes at the caprice of every disgruntled member. Otherwise the proceedings would develop into a farce.

406—*Questioning Chairman's Ruling*

The following standing order aims at protecting the Chairman from flippant challenges. "The ruling of the Chairman on any question under the standing orders or on points of order or explanation shall be final, unless challenged by at least *four* members, and unless two thirds of the members present vote against such ruling." The number could, of course, be varied according to the size of the meeting. Under this procedure, the member who desires to dispute the ruling says: "I challenge your ruling, Mr. Chairman." The Chairman then asks: "Are there three other members present who challenge my decision?" If not, the matter is at an end. If three additional members rise, the Chairman temporarily vacates the Chair. The Secretary then reads the motion as: "That the Chairman's ruling be upheld."

407—*Debate on Chairman's Ruling*

The authorities are practically all silent as to whether discussion should be permitted on the motion. One writer, however, says, that the member who challenges the Chairman's ruling should be allowed to support his contention in a brief speech, and the Chairman should reply, no other speaker being allowed to intervene. We are of the opinion that this is a commonsense course, because speeches are only forbidden on formal motions usually, whereas the Chairman's ruling may be a vitally important matter. Precedent is dead against this, however, and we do not remember a single occasion when any speeches whatever have been permitted on such a motion.

408—*Putting the Motion*

The motion is then put to the vote by the Secretary, and unless two-thirds of the members present vote against the motion, the Chairman's ruling must stand. Of course, even if the motion is carried, it does not mean that the Chairman's decisions for the whole meeting have been rejected, but just the one under dispute. And here let us say a few words to the Chairman. Don't stand on an imaginary "dignity," and resign your position like some we have known. You are liable to make errors just as other people. You are a democrat, so abide by the will of the majority and carry on.

409—*Right of Reply*

There is a good deal of misapprehension on the so-called "right of reply." It is merely a *privilege*, which is customarily allowed to the mover of an original motion, who is thus given the opportunity of replying to the discussion on the proposition he has put forward. It is within the discretion of

the Chairman to withhold the privilege of reply if he considers it expedient to do so, unless the standing orders provide that the mover of an original motion *shall* be entitled to reply. In this latter case this definitely establishes his right. This privilege cannot be allowed to the mover of an amendment, or of the previous question, the adjournment of the debate, or any formal motion, under any circumstances. A rare exception to this rule is in the Standing Orders of the Co-operative Congress, which permit the mover of an amendment that has become a substantive motion, to reply.

410—*Dispensing with a Reply*

In some cases it would be a complete waste of time if the "right of reply" was to be insisted upon. For example, during the debate not one speaker may be against the motion. Everybody may appear in favour of it. Why, in such circumstances, should not the vote be taken without delay? Yet some movers, in order to air their erudition, would inflict themselves again on the meeting, utterly regardless of any other pressing business waiting to be dealt with. The Chairman should protect members against this victimisation, and himself close the debate by saying he considers further discussion useless. He should then put the question.

411—*No New Matter Allowed in Reply*

As has been stated earlier, the mover must confine himself to answering the arguments which have been advanced. Yet, although *new matter* is forbidden, many debaters contrive by one means or another to bring in new facts and fresh arguments, sometimes to such an extent as to make out practically a new case. Often the Chairman will be puzzled to know whether to intervene or not, but when uncertain it is

best to give the speaker the benefit of the doubt. If the speaker goes too far it is almost certain that some of the members will call the Chairman's attention to the fact, and it is much easier for him to intervene in that event.

412—*When to Reply*

Where an amendment is moved, the correct time to reply is at the end of the discussion on the first amendment. We have heard it contended in opposition to this view that by doing so no further discussion can be allowed or further amendments moved, because of the fact that as soon as the reply has been made the debate is closed. Those who say this are overlooking the fact that the reply closes the discussion on the amendment only, and even when the voting has been taken, it is still in order for other amendments to be moved to the surviving proposition. If the mover of the original motion does not seize this opportunity to reply, he loses the opportunity altogether, because, if the amendment is carried his motion ceases to exist. Where an amendment has been moved to an amendment, the original motion retires for the time being. Consequently its mover should not reply until the quarrel between these amendments is settled, and the debate on the surviving amendment has been concluded.

413—*No Transfer of Reply*

In the House of Commons the right of reply has grown up by custom until it has become more or less recognised. But, strictly speaking, a Member is not entitled to exercise this privilege until all the Members who wish to speak have done so. This is a very unlikely event under modern conditions in the House, where there are usually dozens of Members trying to catch the Speaker's eye. So it is often impossible for

a Member himself to reply to debate on his own motion. Another practice has grown up by which the Speaker usually arranges, that the debate upon a Private Member's motion shall be wound up by the *supporter* of the motion. When a bill is introduced by the Government, the motion, "That the Bill be now read a second time," is moved by *one* Minister and the last speech in the debate is made by *another* Minister. The Standing Orders of the House of Commons do not recognise the right of Government speakers to wind up the debate or for one Minister to transfer his right of reply to another. It is a custom which has grown up and there is no means of enforcing it except by the general consent of the House. Similarly, if a motion of censure is moved by the Opposition, the Government is allowed by custom to have the last word. Where a Bill has been sent to a standing committee, and from it has been reported back to the House, the Member in charge of the Bill may at that stage speak more than once. So may the mover of a new clause or an amendment. With these exceptions nothing in the way of a *right* of reply is provided by the rules of the House of Commons.

414—*Suspension of Standing Orders*

Standing orders are literally the rules which govern the meeting. Therefore, it is desirable that they should be interfered with as little as possible, but there are occasions when a subject is of such urgency and importance that it is imperative for it to be given precedence. Or it may happen that a subject which is legitimately on the Agenda cannot be discussed by the usual method of one speech only per member. Again, it may be found desirable that certain speakers be allowed more time to expound their case than the standing orders propose. In all such cases the easiest method of getting over the difficulty is to suspend the standing orders.

415—*Discrimination in Suspension*

The Chairman must examine each claim for suspension with great care, and unhesitatingly refuse to accept the suspension in relation to anything that is not absolutely of vast urgency or importance. He should require the member moving the suspension to state the exact standing orders (or order) the latter desires to be suspended. Some speakers simply rise and say: "I move that the standing orders be suspended to hear this case." Literally interpreted, this would mean that the whole of the standing orders would be suspended. Obviously, the debate would then proceed without any rules at all. This would be an impossible position. The correct method is for the member, after having decided which standing order he desires suspended, to move: "That standing orders Nos. so-and-so and so-and-so be suspended in order to discuss this subject." The member should also be required to state the length of time the proposed suspension shall last.

416—*Two-Thirds Majority*

A suspension of standing orders should require at least a two-thirds majority of those present to vote in its favour. That is to say if one hundred members in all vote, sixty-six must vote in favour of the suspension. If the suspension of several standing orders has been moved, the Chairman can accept an amendment to delete certain of these from the motion. A simpler procedure is for him to put the individual standing orders separately to the vote, and thus make sure there is a two-thirds majority on each. The Chairman is entitled to refuse a motion for the suspension of standing orders, if he is of opinion that the suspension is moved purely for the purpose of obstruction. If, under the standing orders, his decision is final on points of order, his position is

impregnable. He should, however, try to carry the members with him in his rulings. This is infinitely better than to act against the feeling of the meeting.

417—*Standing Orders Committee*

Where delegate meetings or rules revision conferences are being held, or, in fact, on any occasion where there is likely to be a multiplicity of motions and amendments, it is always advisable for a standing orders committee to be appointed. This committee will be of the greatest value in economising the time of the meeting by eliminating discussions on overlapping motions, and by reducing the Agenda to a practicable minimum. The size of such a standing orders committee depends on the size of the conference, and is entirely a matter for the discretion of the body convening the latter. Any recommendations that the standing orders committee may make must, however, be brought before the Conference for confirmation, and its report should be moved in the form of a motion in the ordinary way. Usually this is done by the Chairman of the standing orders committee, and where contentious points are involved, discussion and amendment to refer back, may be allowed.

418—*Summary of Chapter Fourteen*

Points of order are breaches of procedure. Members rising must prove that speaker is (1) straying, (2) using unparliamentary language, (3) infringing rules or standing orders. Questions as to intended procedure are valid, and may be raised at any time. Correcting remarks of another speaker is not point of order. Points put briefly in form of question. No speeches. Time taken by interruptions must not encroach on speaker's allowance. Member may explain his position by permission of Chairman. One speech only on each occasion. Every amendment raises

separate question, and members are free to speak thereon. If subject is difficult, meeting may go into committee. Speeches then unrestricted. Disputants should state whether they are for or against a motion. Members may oppose motion by (1) speaking against, (2) moving amendment, or (3) moving previous question, next business, or adjournment. Speeches must be relevant. Chairman may stop speaker for tiresome repetition. Ruling may be challenged. Discussion may be allowed, but precedent is dead against this. Motion put by Secretary. Must be carried by two-thirds majority. Mover of an original motion allowed to reply. Chairman may dispense with this if no opposition. No new matter may be introduced in reply. Reply made at end of debate on original motion. If amendment moved, reply taken at end of debate thereon. Mover of amendment cannot reply. No right to transfer reply to other member. Standing orders may be suspended to allow more latitude in speaking. Exact standing order should be named by mover and suspension only allowed by two-thirds majority. Standing orders committee make suggestions as to order. Their report may be discussed and referred back.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Paragraphs 419-440

Minutes and Correspondence

Shows how the practice of taking minutes arose in the House of Commons. Tells how these should be compiled. Refers to the dangers of over-condensing. Gives specimens and explains how minutes are treated, who may confirm them, and how to deal with matters arising. Also something about the handling of correspondence.

419—What Minutes Are

The term "minutes" means a brief but accurate record of the business transacted at the meeting to which they refer. They are compiled by the Secretary from notes taken by him while the meeting is in progress. These notes are later written out in proper form and entered into a book called the "minute book," which is especially kept for that purpose. The practice was established in this country by Parliament whose records have continued from 1547 to the present day, with a short interruption during Queen Elizabeth's reign. Every day when Parliament is sitting there are circulated to the members the Votes and Proceedings or Minutes of the previous day. These are made from notes taken by the Clerks at the Table, and are a brief summary of the subjects dealt with the previous day by the House.

420—Minute of H.O.C.

For example, the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday the 2nd August, 1939, contains ten items, and the form in which the notes are made can be gathered from the following extract:—

"9. Adjournment (Summer).—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, at its rising on Friday, do adjourn till Tuesday, 3rd October; provided that if it is represented to Mr. Speaker by His Majesty's Government that the public interest requires that the House should meet at any earlier time during the Adjournment, and Mr. Speaker is satisfied that the public interest does so require, he may give notice that he is so satisfied, and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and the Government Business to be transacted on the day on which the House shall so meet shall, subject to the publication of notice thereof in the Order Paper to be circulated on the day on which the House shall so meet, be such as the Government may appoint, but subject as aforesaid the House shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to the day on which it shall so meet, and any Government Orders of the Day and Government Notices of Motions that may stand on the

Order Book for the 3rd day of October or any subsequent day shall be appointed for the day on which the House shall so meet; provided also that in the event of Mr. Speaker being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, the Chairman of Ways and Means, in his capacity as Deputy Speaker, be authorised to act in his stead for the purposes of this Resolution:”—(The Prime Minister:)—

Amendment proposed, in line 2, to leave out the words “Tuesday 3rd October,” and insert the words “Monday 21st August,”—(Mr. Greenwood,)—instead thereof:—

Question put, “That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:”—The House divided; Ayes 250, Noes 132.

Main Question put:—The House divided; Ayes 245, Noes 129.”

From these Votes and Proceedings is later compiled the Journal of the House of Commons which gives the proceedings at greater length, and which is printed at the end of every session. The early Journals used to be much fuller than is necessary nowadays when the debates are reported verbatim by a staff of official reporters.

421—*Journals as Evidence*

These verbatim reports are later published officially as “Parliamentary Debates.” They are seldom so referred to by Members, who generally speak of them as “Hansard,” after Luke Hansard who was at one time printer to the House of Commons. Hansard’s reports were at first taken from the newspapers and, after being revised by Members, were published as “Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates.” In 1857 the Treasury subsidised the cost of publication. When the Hansard family eventually went out of business the work was done by contract. In 1908 the Government undertook the task itself, and since that time a staff of reporters and typists has been employed in compiling the reports, which are published by H.M. Stationery Office under the direct authority of the

Speaker. The Journals, however, remain the official Minutes as it were, and are adduceable as evidence in a Court of Law under the Evidence Act of 1845. They are perused by the Speaker before publication, but are not submitted to the House for confirmation as a correct record. In the 17th century confirmation used to be undertaken by committee, but nowadays this is regarded as unnecessary in view of the publicity surrounding the affairs of Parliament, of the responsibilities of the Clerk and Officials compiling the Minutes, and of the strictness of Parliamentary Procedure by which it is certain that if there were inaccuracies in the records attention would soon be called to them.

422—*What Minutes Should Contain*

Sir Reginald Palgrave says the minutes should contain, (1) all motions in the exact form they are put by the Chairman, no matter what their fate may have been. Even though they were withdrawn, negatived, or superseded, they should be entered into the minutes. (2) The names of the movers of such motions, (3) names and numbers of those voting, (4) the Chairman's decisions on matters of order, (5) date of next meeting. It might be somewhat difficult in the case of large meetings to get the names of those voting, but the *numbers* of votes cast for and against any proposition are essential. If a motion or amendment does not receive a seconder, it should not be entered, except for a committee meeting where a seconder is not required.

423—*Incomplete Minutes*

It is to be regretted that this procedure is not more strictly carried out, particularly in regard to committee meetings, or those composed of representatives from different sections or organisations. The members appointing the representatives to such meetings

have a right to know exactly how those representatives have acted, and the minutes should show this. But the minutes of certain bodies are condensed in such a manner as to make this almost impossible. Some years ago a certain Industrial Council was discussing rates of pay. Strong objection to these rates was taken by some of the Trade Union representatives, who moved an amendment suggesting that the rates be referred back for further consideration to the sub-committee which had compiled them.

424—*Minutes May Mislead*

The minutes came out in something like this form :—

“ A discussion took place on the suggested basic rates of pay, certain of the trade union representatives taking exception to the rates laid down. Resolved: ‘ That the Schedule of basic rates as drawn up by the Sub-Committee, be approved.’ ”

There was no record of the amendment which had been moved, or anything to indicate that the trade union representatives had *voted* against the rates suggested. On the contrary, the minutes gave the impression that everybody was in favour of the final decision. This over-condensation is quite a common practice at business meetings. Obviously such a method of compiling minutes is misleading.

425—*Recording Motions and Amendments*

It would have been clearer had the minutes read :—

“ Discussion took place on the question of basic rates. It was moved by Mr. Output, seconded by Mr. Driver, employer’s representatives, ‘ That the Schedule of basic rates be approved.’ Amendment by Mr. Telitwel, seconded by Mr. Ardcase, Union’s representatives: ‘ That the whole Schedule be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.’ The amendment was lost, the mover and seconder only voting for, the rest being against. The motion was then carried as a substantive motion by the same voting.”

This does not occupy very much more space, but it at least shows the true position. Certain public bodies are legally obliged to publish the names of those voting where a division takes place, and the following standing order could be usefully incorporated in the rules of trade unions :—

“Where a difference of opinion at a meeting of any committee occurs, a vote shall be taken, and the names of those voting for and against, and of those abstaining from voting, shall be stated in the minutes.”

Where there is no dissent, it is sufficient to record the result as “Agreed” or “Resolved.”

426—*Specimen of Minutes*

The exact form of the minutes will vary somewhat in accordance with the routine of the society concerned. We give a few items to illustrate the manner in which the minutes of a trade union branch should be kept. It will be observed that the items are headed with the title of the subject, and that the complete minute of the meeting itself, is numbered as well as the separate items. This is not essential, but will be found very convenient for reference, especially if the Secretary is energetic enough to make an index at the end of the year.

MINUTE No. 1.

(Society's Heading).

Minutes of *First* Meeting (1939) of the Chugwell Branch, held at the Blue Boar, on Monday the 2nd January, 1939. Mr. Fairman in the Chair, at 8 p.m.

1. Secretary read the notice convening the meeting, after which the Agenda was read by the Chairman.
2. The Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 22nd December, 1938, were read and confirmed on the motion of Mr. Frost, seconded by Mr. Winter, and duly signed.

3. FORMATION OF INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL.

Letter was read from the Head Office, stating that the Executive were in negotiation for the formation of an Industrial Council. It was moved by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Green,

“That the Executive Council be recommended to ballot the members before proceeding with the establishment of an Industrial Council.”

Carried,—50 for, 20 against.

4. APPLICATION FOR REDUCTION IN HOURS.

Correspondence was read from the Chugwell Branch of the Employers' Association stating that, in view of the economic depression, it was not possible to reduce hours at the present time. It was moved by Mr. Broad, seconded by Mr. Stout,

“That the employers be urged to meet a deputation to discuss the matter.”

Amendment moved, Mr. Hasty, seconded by Mr. Stalwart,

“That the members be recommended to consider the advisability of ceasing overtime until the reduction in hours is conceded.”

The amendment was put and lost, only the mover and seconder voting for. The original motion was then put as a substantive motion and was carried without dissent.

5. LABOUR DAY DEMONSTRATION.

Correspondence was read from the Chugwell Labour Party recommending that a demonstration be held on May Day. Moved Mr. Bolt, seconded by Mr. Lock,

“That we fall in with the suggestion and propose Monday the 1st May as the date for the demonstration.”

Amendment moved Mr. Short, seconded Mr. Long,

“That whilst supporting the suggestion, we consider the most suitable day to be Sunday, 7th May.”

Notice of further amendment was given by Mr. Wise. The amendment was put and carried, 46 for and 23 against. Further amendment moved Mr. Wise, seconded Mr. Butt,

“That we write the Chugwell Trades Council suggesting the formation of a Joint Committee with the Labour Party to consider this matter, and we defer any decision pending their advice.”

The further amendment was put and carried, 40 for and 30 against. It was then put as a substantive motion and carried, 5 only voting against.

6. TRADES COUNCIL REPORT.

Mr. Spout gave a report as delegate to the Trades Council. It was agreed,

“That the report be accepted, as having been read.”
Arising from the report it was moved Mr. Hare, seconded Mr. Beard,

“That this Branch object to the proposal to increase the affiliation fees and we therefore refer same back to the Council for reconsideration.”

The motion was carried unanimously.

It was agreed on the motion of the Chairman,

“That the report, as amended, be approved.”

This concluded the correspondence. It was agreed,

“That the same be passed as having been read.”

7. TRADES UNION CONGRESS STUDY COURSE.

The above body wrote drawing attention to their study course and to their list of pamphlets for trade unionists. It was agreed on the motion of Mr. Fish, seconded by Mr. Codd,

“That a copy of the A.B.C. of Chairmanship be purchased for the use of branch officers, and that the list of pamphlets and particulars of the study course be circulated to members.”

8. NEW BUSINESS.

Mr. Frank desired to move a motion rescinding Standing Order No. 6. The Chairman ruled that this would require a notice of motion. Mr. Frank agreed to do this and forward same to the Secretary.

It was resolved

“That the next meeting take place on the 16th January, 1939.”

MEETING TERMINATED AT 10 p.m.

(Signed) JOHN FAIRMAN, *Chairman.*

16th January, 1939.

427—*The Minute Book*

It will be observed we have started the minutes, "Minutes of *First* Meeting, 1939," and put "M.1." meaning Meeting 1 in the top corner. The record of the next meeting would be headed "Minutes of *Second* Meeting" and so on with each meeting throughout the year. The references in the top corner being altered accordingly. This is always desirable, particularly where the minutes are stencilled and circulated. It is so easy to misplace a copy, and not to realise it is missing if the date only is given. With the system suggested all copies can easily be checked by the numbers. The original minutes should be written in a book, but if typed on loose sheets these should be pasted into the book. Loose typed sheets might not be accepted as evidence in a court of law unless each sheet were initialled by the Chairman.

428—*Reading and Passing the Minutes*

The first business immediately after the Agenda has been read should always be the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting by the Secretary. If the minutes appear to be correct some member should rise and say: "I move that the minutes be passed as a correct record." Another member should join in with: "I second that motion." The object of the motion is to place on record that the minutes are an absolutely correct account of the business transacted. Once the minutes have been passed they should be signed by the Chairman and the date entered underneath. It will be noticed that, in accordance with this procedure, the specimen minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd January were signed by the Chairman on the 16th January, that being the date of the succeeding meeting.

429—*No Discussion Except on Accuracy*

No discussion can be allowed on this motion, except in regard to *accuracy* of the minutes.

Sometimes the motion is worded, "That the minutes be endorsed." Mr. Gore Brown, K.C., in his "Handbook on Joint Stock Companies," says that this is incorrect. The word "endorsed" means to sanction, and by this motion, members might think that they were being asked to approve of the *policy* of the minutes. But the members present at the previous meeting decided *that* point. The present meeting has simply to deal with the question as to whether or not the minutes are a *correct record*. It is advisable that the passage of the minutes should be moved and seconded by members who were actually present at the last meeting, and who, therefore, *know* that they are a correct record. This is not absolutely essential, however. Until the minutes have been passed, no other business can be proceeded with.

430—Corrections in the Minutes

If some member is of the opinion that there is an error in, or an omission from the minutes, he should not interrupt the reading of the minutes, but when the Secretary has finished, the member should insist on the error being rectified. Often the correction will be accepted by the Secretary, and inserted at once in the minutes, but if the error is not admitted, the member drawing attention to the point should move an amendment to have the minutes rectified.

431—Amendments to the Minutes

The amendment should be seconded by another member, and put to the vote by the Chairman, who may allow some discussion. If the amendment is carried, the correction must be at once inserted in the margin of the minutes and initialled by the Chairman. If there are no further errors, the Chairman should put the motion: "That the minutes as amended be passed as a correct record." Every

member then votes by holding up one hand, either for or against the motion, and if there is a majority in favour the minutes are declared passed. The Chairman should then sign them. The Chairman's signature is essential from the legal point of view. It should be remembered that the minutes may be required as evidence at any time, and care should be taken to have them as complete as possible. If they are typed on separate sheets, each sheet should be initialled by the Chairman.

432—*Danger of Omissions*

The members should be specially vigilant to see that the minutes contain every *resolution* which was passed at the previous meeting. The minutes are the evidence of what occurred, and if by any chance a resolution had been omitted by the Secretary in entering the minutes in the minute book, there would be no record at all that the resolution was ever passed. If the minutes had to be produced in a court of law or elsewhere as evidence, in all probability it would be assumed that no such resolution was passed.

433—*Confirmation of Committee Minutes*

In the case of committee meetings, it is often prescribed by the rules that the minutes should be read and passed at the conclusion of each committee meeting. It is, therefore, not within the power of a full branch meeting to question their accuracy. That is entirely a matter for the committee. If, however, it has not been possible to read over the minutes at the conclusion of the committee meeting, any member of the committee who, in the subsequent meeting of the full branch, doubts their accuracy, should draw attention to the points he has in mind and if his fellow committee-men support him, the minutes should be amended accordingly. The other members of the branch are concerned not with

the accuracy of the minutes, but with their *policy* and *recommendations*. Therefore branch committee minutes should be dealt with on the lines of delegate reports, as explained in paragraph 262. If any items have been referred by the committee to the full branch, the motion for the acceptance of the minutes should read: "That the committee minutes be endorsed with the exception of those items otherwise appearing on the Agenda." The minutes of executive council and district committees are similar to those of branch committees in so far that their accuracy is not a question for the branch to consider. If the branch disapproves of the policy of any particular item in these minutes, it can refer same back for further consideration to the committee.

434—Minutes of Delegate and Aggregate Meetings

Minutes of delegate meetings and annual conferences are usually treated in the same manner as those of the committee meetings, so far as their confirmation is concerned. Rule 2 of the National Union of Railwaymen says: "As to the Minutes of Annual and Special General Meetings, the first business upon each day of such meetings shall be to confirm the Minutes of the preceding day—the Minutes of the last day's proceedings shall be submitted at the close thereof." The Trades Union Congress minutes are similarly treated with the exception of the last day's proceedings. No minutes are taken at the Labour Party Conferences, the official verbatim report serving as the authentic records of proceedings.

435—Committee Has Power to Confirm Minutes

It should be understood, however, that a Committee has the power to confirm the minutes of aggregate meetings held under its auspices. Thus, the con-

firmation of the minutes of a district mass meeting is a matter for the district committee. This is a common-sense course, because in the case of an annual meeting, if the minutes were not read at its conclusion (and it is not always possible to do this), it would mean that the minutes would remain unconfirmed until the next annual meeting. It is quite unnecessary to read the minutes of a previous aggregate meeting, to the succeeding aggregate meeting for purposes of confirmation, providing that such minutes have been confirmed by the committee convening the aggregate meeting. As soon as the verbatim report of the Trades Union Congress is printed, it is the practice of the General Council to confirm it as a correct record.

436—*Matters Arising from the Minutes*

Once the minutes have been passed, it is usual for the Chairman to ask: "Are there any questions arising from the minutes?" There may be a point in the minutes instructing the Secretary to do certain things, and it is quite in order for any member to ask whether any action has been taken in regard to a particular item. The Secretary may then make a brief report on what has been done regarding that item. The Chairman should not allow any general discussion on the subject, but must confine it entirely to points of information. Some writers say motions may be allowed instructing further action, but in our opinion that is quite wrong. If anyone desires certain action to be taken, he should notify the Chairman and bring the subject forward again at the end of the meeting, under "new business." Otherwise the meeting might go on discussing the minutes all night. After matters arising from the minutes have been disposed of, the Chairman should proceed with the items on the Agenda.

437—How to Deal with the Correspondence

The procedure which is to be adopted when correspondence comes before the meeting may be divided under three heads: (1) taking it as a whole, (2) dealing with each letter separately, and (3) grouping the letters in subject form. The practice varies with different societies. At branch meetings the general method is for the Secretary to read all the letters, and the Chairman then asks for a motion, "That the correspondence be accepted as read." When this has been formally passed, he asks: "Anything arising?" Members are then free to ask any question they desire, or to move any motion regarding the action they consider should be taken. No regular order is observed, and usually the letters read last are discussed first, because they are fresh in the minds of the members. The fault of this method is that items may escape the vigilance of the meeting. A safeguard against this is for members to jot down any point which occurs to them during the reading. Further, it is the Secretary's duty to see that *important* letters are not overlooked. He should (with the Chairman's approval) put any really vital letter down as a separate item on the Agenda.

438—Letters Taken Separately

The method of taking every letter separately is surer, but many times is unnecessarily lengthy. By this means, as soon as a letter is read, a motion should be moved on it. If it does not call for action, then a formal motion such as, "That the letter be noted," or, "That the letter be accepted without comment," should be moved. The object of such motions is to ensure that a record of the receipt of the letter will be made in the minutes.

439—Grouping Letters Together

In our view, the best method is to group together all letters dealing with the same subject. There are two

advantages in this. First, the members have their minds focussed on the subject as a whole, and, secondly, the one motion will probably cover the whole of the letters on that subject. A broader view can be obtained by the meeting, and a more expeditious transaction of business obtained than by the other methods. It has the further advantage that the minutes can be easily indexed in subject form, so that a decision on any point can be readily referred to. Of course, individual mention must be made of the receipt of the various letters. The grouping system should always be adopted in committee, or where the correspondence is extensive. It will be observed that we have adopted this course in the specimen minutes given in this Chapter.

440—*Summary of Chapter Fifteen*

Minutes are a brief record of meeting. Originated with practice of the House of Commons through Votes of Proceedings and Journal. These distinct from official shorthand report called "Hansard." Minutes must contain all motions brought before meeting, names of movers, records of voting, Chairman's ruling, date of next meeting. Minutes should be headed "First Meeting," "Second Meeting," and so on, and each item numbered sequentially. Written in book if possible, or pasted in if typed. Minutes read immediately after Agenda at subsequent meeting. Motion then moved: "Minutes be passed as correct record." No discussion except on accuracy. If inaccurate or incomplete should be corrected if necessary by amendment. Discussion allowed on such amendments. Chairman signs minutes as soon as passed. Committee minutes read and passed by committee itself. Branch treats such matters as reports. Minutes of delegate meetings usually confirmed by delegates at the end of meeting. After minutes are passed questions allowed on points of information. Motions affecting policy of minutes should be brought forward under "New Business." Agenda proceeded with after minutes disposed of. Correspondence should be grouped together in subject order, but Secretary should be vigilant to see that nothing is overlooked.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Paragraphs 441—475

Hints for Chairmen,
Members & Speakers

*Shows how easy it is to give advice but not
always to apply it. Plenty of hints for
Chairmen, members and speakers.*

441—*To the Chairman*

First, Mr. Chairman, a few words with you. Remember that the members by electing you have put their trust in you. Try to be worthy of it. The job you have taken on is not an easy one, and you may depend on it that you will be a target for criticism. Fortify yourself by diligently looking up the standing orders and the general rules of the society. Always have them on the table before you for purposes of reference. Get down to the meeting a little early, and in conjunction with the Secretary draw up an Agenda. You can thus form a good idea as to what rules or standing orders the business is likely to involve, and you will have an opportunity of examining these before the meeting commences. Look up the A.B.C. of Chairmanship now and then, it will keep you in practice. Consult the subject index or the summaries if you get in a tangle. You will then be able to call them to mind immediately, in case it is necessary. The members will admire your memory, so that your decisions will soon be recognised as authoritative. As the meeting proceeds tick off each item on the Agenda as it is finished.

442—*Necessity for Impartiality*

You will never achieve success unless you are absolutely impartial. Never mind about your popularity. You have a duty to perform which cannot be fulfilled unless you are quite fearless in your decisions. There are bound to be differences of opinion upon almost every question which comes before the meeting, and it is your duty to hold the scales evenly and fairly between the various disputants. Don't think *you* are the meeting. Intervene as little as possible in the discussion, and don't obtrude your personal opinions on the merits of the debate. The less you have to say, the less you are likely to be accused of taking sides. Once let the members

suspect you of partiality and your authority will suffer in consequence. Lord Asquith once wisely said: "It is the business of a Chairman to listen and not to speak, and the essential qualities of that office are not those of an orator but an oracle." Think over this.

443—Cultivate Discretion

Be firm, but always remember that *other* people have feelings. Try to inspire in your members a sense of respect for your office. Some Chairmen, in their anxiety to be impartial, convey the impression of weakness to their members, with the result that their rulings are frequently questioned, and in time they become quite confused. Others go to the opposite extreme, and, in trying to be firm, become autocratic. Avoid both of these pitfalls, and, above all, cultivate *tact*. Tact and patience are to the Chairman what lubricating oil is to the engine. Always be prepared to allow a relevant question should one be put. Don't bully the members, or pander to them. Always have your stewards and doorkeepers appointed before the meeting. All government rests on force, so don't neglect to have plenty ready in case of disturbance. If a man wants to argue with you unnecessarily, and won't sit down, keep ringing the bell continuously until he does. He will get tired before you do. Above all, keep cool.

444—Care of Details

Be careful as to the small points, even those which some members would consider of no importance. Permit no cross-talking in open meeting, and keep it down in committee. Insist that every member addresses the chair only. Set an example by rising yourself when addressing the members. See that all are seated when *you* are speaking. Try to get them to stand in *big* committees. See that speakers do not

exceed their time limit, and give them warning that their time is expiring by touching the bell a minute or so before their time is up. Be businesslike, and see that the meetings start promptly. Sign the minutes immediately they have been passed, and initial any corrections which may have been made in them.

445—Taking Part in the Discussion

In committee meetings the Chairman is quite free to express his opinions, and these are frequently both valuable and necessary. He need *not* vacate the chair unless required to do so by the standing orders, and in practice it is very rarely indeed that the Chairman does so. There is never the same danger of being accused of partiality, nor the difficulty in preserving strict discipline in committee, as there is in general meetings. In general meetings it is a bad principle for a Chairman to take part in the discussion unless the meeting evinces a desire for him to do so. Even then he should remember the old tag, that it is the Chairman's job "to stand up, speak up, and shut up." Generally speaking, if the Chairman feels impelled to take part as a *disputant*, in open meeting, he should leave the chair, and a temporary Chairman should be elected until the discussion on the subject has been completed. Even then his authority is inevitably weakened.

446—Chairman's Address

The foregoing, of course, does not apply to the introductory remarks which the Chairman usually makes at annual and general meetings. The Chairman's address, in such cases, is usually a feature of the meeting. The Chairman is not then acting as *disputant*, and his remarks should be confined to a clear and reasoned statement of the objects of the meeting, and may touch upon the various questions which are to be dealt with.

447—*Casting Vote*

Ordinarily the Chairman's voting powers are governed by the Rules of the Society. Normally he should not vote at all on general questions, but on any motion on which the members are equally divided for and against, he has the power to give a "casting vote." This "casting vote" is not given on ballot votes, nor is it usual where very important issues are concerned. The Chairman would, in the latter event, be well advised to think twice before he votes at all.

448—*Not Carried*

It is not compulsory for the Chairman to exercise his casting vote. He can refuse to do so if he desires. Thus, if a motion was put and equal numbers voted for and against, the Chairman can decline to vote, and declare the motion "not carried." This is entirely a different thing from voting against the motion. This does not debar the motion from being brought forward at a later meeting. If it was lost, this could not be done without a notice of motion. On ballot votes the Chairman has the right to vote like any other member.

449—*Selecting the Speakers*

When speakers rise simultaneously to address the Chair, the Chairman decides which of them has "got the floor." As a matter of courtesy, precedence is usually given to a new member, or to one who has not previously spoken during the meeting. Generally, the Chairman's decision will be accepted without question, but if the meeting desires to hear a certain speaker who has been overlooked by him, it is in order for a motion to be moved for that purpose. For example, "That Mr. Spoutwell be heard." This must be accepted by the Chairman, and if carried Mr. Spoutwell straightway addresses the meeting.

450—*Relevance of Motions*

The Chairman is not responsible for the policy of any motion or amendment which may be brought before the meeting, but must see that such are not outside the scope of the meeting. In the latter case he must decline to accept them, but should not interpret this rule too narrowly. Similarly, he must not allow any motion which is clearly illegal, nor one which is frivolous. He cannot refuse a motion or amendment which is otherwise in order merely because he differs from the policy which it expresses. Even though he may think it indiscreet or harmful, he must accept it. There is no exception to this rule. Gore Brown on Company Procedure says :—

“If the Chairman improperly refuses to submit an amendment to the meeting, the resolution actually carried will be invalidated.”

He must see that all motions and amendments (except in committee) are duly seconded, and allow no discussion until this has been done.

451—*A Talk to the Members*

The first and most important point for you to remember, is that without *your* presence no meeting is thoroughly representative. Take an interest in your meetings. Do not be afraid to express your opinions, but at the same time, remember that others have a right to speak as well as yourself. If you have any matter you wish to bring forward, put it in writing and hand it to the Chairman. This will ensure its being brought forward. Again, if you wish to move a proposition in reference to an item which is already on the Agenda, and the circumstances permit, put this in writing also. Chairmen are not professional shorthand writers, and by this method you will have the satisfaction of knowing that the wording of your motion is just what you wish it to be. Try to be punctual. The Chairman cannot start the meeting

until there is a meeting to be started. *You* help to form that meeting. After all, it is your business which is to be transacted. See that it is done properly.

452—How Not to Act

We came across the following satirical advice some time ago : “ (1) Don’t come to the meetings. (2) If you do come, come late. (3) If the weather does not suit you, don’t think of coming. (4) If you do attend the meetings find fault with the officers and other members. (5) Never accept office, as it is easier to criticise than to do things. (6) Nevertheless, get sore if you are not appointed to a committee. If appointed, do not attend the committee meetings. (7) If asked to give your opinion, tell the Chairman you have nothing to say. After the meeting, tell everyone how things should be done. (8) Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when others willingly and unselfishly use their ability to help matters along, howl that the meetings are run by a clique.” We commend this to those whom it touches.

453—Support Your Chairman

Make it a point of honour to support and help the Chairman in every way. If he makes mistakes, be charitable. Do not wither him with scorn, or wax sarcastic over his errors. If it is imperative to correct him, treat him with that courtesy with which you expect to be treated. Don’t expose his weaknesses before the other members unnecessarily. Instead, have a quiet talk with him after the meeting. He will appreciate it far more. And you may be a Chairman yourself some day.

454—Hints for Speakers

Like most people we are much better at giving advice than at applying it. Nor do we claim to know all there is to know about public speaking. But we know

a little, and here are some tips which may prove helpful. First don't expect to become an orator. Oratory is a natural gift which few possess. You must have the right temperament. The orator thrives on the emotions he awakens *and* which he receives from his audience. Try to be content with something less. Fluency and even eloquence can be attained by care and practice. The great secret is adequate preparation. Always prepare your speech beforehand. There are two essentials in public speaking. The first is to have something to say. The second to know how to say it.

455—*Preparation of Matter*

First as to the matter. Read everything you can on the subject and get it well in mind. If you are a beginner you will have more confidence if you write your speech out fairly fully. But you shouldn't read it to the audience. Try it on the family first. If they can't stand it go into a room by yourself and address the furniture.

Mr. Oliver Stanley, the President of the Board of Trade, jocularly described his recipe for composing speeches: "There is first of all a humorous beginning which I get from the smoking room of the House of Commons; secondly there is the body of the speech which I obtain from my permanent officials; thirdly a peroration which I try to get from a recent speech of one of my more eloquent colleagues." As applied to some speakers it is possible to discern in this "a grain or two of truth among the chaff."

456—*Don't Memorise*

It is really no compliment to an audience for a speaker to think that all he has to do is simply to get up and spout. They expect something better than mere generalities in these days of wireless talks. So try to meditate what you are going to say. Neither read

your speech nor try to memorise it. In either case your delivery will tend to become lifeless and mechanical. There are exceptions of course. Winston Churchill is one of the few who can both memorise and read well. At a League of Nations meeting at the Albert Hall some years ago, when he was a speaker, he read every word of his speech, but it was delivered in such a manner that we are sure that very few people knew.

457—*Keep Mind Free*

On occasions of supreme importance where every word may be reported and used in evidence against you, you can't usually avoid reading a speech. But it is bound to lose something in delivery and freshness. Presidential addresses are perhaps an exception. The audience expect a written address and *are* not disappointed. A speaker's mind should be free to improvise ideas, allusions and metaphors which are often generated by the very act of speaking. But it must have a foundation on which to build. So if you have written your speech in full, boil it down and prepare notes from it. If you really are afraid of breaking down through nervousness, take the manuscript with you, but don't use it unless you are driven to it.

458—*Make Clear Notes*

Depend on your notes. Your notes are reminders of what you want to say. Make them clear and brief. The notes of some speakers are like a difficult inscription in hieroglyphics. How they ever read them at all is a mystery. Probably they don't! There is no doubt that notes restrict a speaker. They tend to make him hold himself in. Yet so few of us can manage without notes. In his heyday, when he was on the tip-top of his form, few orators could excel

Ben Tillett. His language was superb and his style irreproachable. He never used anything more than a few scrappy notes. Yet we know he always carefully thought out beforehand the theme of his speech. You must make notes if you want to preserve sequence. Notes will prevent you from wandering and that is worth something. Your audience may never know if you do lose sequence. But you will know. You will probably kick yourself afterwards for forgetting something vital. So put the points down.

459—*Main and Sub-Heads*

Make main headings and sub-headings. Don't put more than three words on a line. With practice a single word will do. Your notes should be something like this :—

WHY USE NOTES

1. Avoid loss of sequence.
2. Close-knit argument.
3. Guard against omissions.
4. Memories are faulty.

You can expand each of these points in your remarks before passing to the next main heading.

460—*Think Out Illustrations*

Give apt illustrations if you can. Think them out beforehand. If something strikes you when you are out walking with the dog, put it down in your notebook. Those glowing periods, trite aphorisms, catchy metaphors and slogans which seem so spontaneous when you hear them, have usually been worked out beforehand. So don't *despair* but *prepare*.

Don't bother too much about the exact words you want to use. Have the gist of your opening and concluding sentences in mind. Take care of the beginning and the end of the speech and the middle will take care of itself. The language will come to you at the right moment. *If you know your subject.*

461—Jot Down Ideas

In preparing a speech take all the time you can to turn the subject over in your mind. Whenever an idea occurs to you always jot it down. Ideas come at the most unexpected moments. Sometimes they don't recur. So catch them when they are fresh. Put them down on a piece of paper, stick them in an envelope or a file for use when you really settle down to write your notes. Some people think best when they are alone and walking. Like the peripatetic philosophers of Greece, they can't *sit* and think. It is awkward to jot down ideas on such occasions but it is worth the trouble.

462—Number the Pages

In finally compiling your notes, make them brief, clear, and number every page. It is a horrible thing to find, when you are in the middle of an address, that you have got the pages of your notes mixed up. Check everything before you start. You may find it more convenient to keep your notes on cards, about the size of postcards, so that you can hold them in your hand whilst you are speaking. The advantage is that you can peep at them every few minutes if you like. The disadvantage is that this tends to restrict the freedom of your gestures. The alternative is to put your notes on sheets of paper and have them on the table near you. Such notes are not quite so easy to read as those on cards.

463—Importance of Delivery

So much for the matter. Now as to *how* to speak. Delivery or the manner of speaking is as important as matter to most audiences. Try to speak distinctly so that all may hear. Don't mumble or cultivate the art of speaking with your lips nearly closed as some University lecturers aspire to do. If you feel your

heart bumping about before you start, don't be afraid. It only means that you are a bit tensed up like most of the best speakers. Gladstone was always nervous in opening; Baldwin too. It is rumoured that Lloyd George is like a cat on hot bricks just before a meeting. Who would think such speakers could be nervous?

464—*Dodges Before Starting*

If your mouth feels dry and the water-bottle isn't within reach, relax your lower jaw as though you had lost control of the muscles. Let your lips scarcely touch each other. Then you will feel your mouth watering and the dryness will disappear. If water is within reach don't drink too much. Just sip it and moisten your throat as long and as unobtrusively as you can. Just immediately before you are called upon to speak, take a few deep breaths. That will clear your lungs and help your voice. Always use your lowest tones at starting. When people shout "Speak up" don't respond by roaring. They will soon be listening up. Try to suit your voice to the size of the hall. Even in big halls sentences spoken quietly yet distinctly can often be heard by everyone. Speak slowly and distinctly at the commencement. Your pace will almost certainly quicken later.

465—*Pitch Voice Down*

If you start on a high note you will assuredly go higher still before long. Even people with powerful voices and great experience do this sometimes. They start, become interested, emphasise some passage, shout still louder and higher, and then—the voice cracks. At the first sign of this, pause as soon as you can, relax your throat and commence the next passage lower. Try to gain a few seconds by looking at your notes or by taking a drink. It requires control, but do it. The human voice is very flexible. But few of us use

it properly. Reading aloud is an excellent practice to acquire control of voice inflection, volume and articulation. Clear articulation is most important. Give every word its proper value. But don't be pedantic about it. Merely take care not to slur a syllable. Don't say "praps" when you mean "perhaps" or "labratry" for "laboratory."

466—*Speak Towards "Mike"*

If there is a microphone don't be afraid of it. It will help you. Quiet speakers should stand near the mike and speak into it, say not more than a foot away. You needn't fix your eyes on the mike as though it had magnetised you. Look at your audience but avoid the temptation to turn away to speak to the Chairman or someone at the extreme sides of the hall. If you turn your words will be lost. If you have a powerful voice stand further back until you hear how your voice is going over. You can even go a yard back and still most microphones will pick up the sound. Never roar down the mike. It irritates the audience and interferes with the audibility of what you are saying.

467—*Losing Your Drift*

Sometimes you may start a sentence and lose your point halfway through. Maybe you see someone smiling when you have said nothing to laugh at. Don't take it to heart. Shocking as the suggestion may be, the chances are that he was not listening to you at that moment but was thinking of something else. You mustn't expect to hold the attention of everyone for every second you are speaking. But you have forgotten your point and you feel alarmed. Don't worry. Just keep on talking. The point will come back to you. The audience will probably not notice any lapses. Many quite well-known speakers leave dozens of sentences half finished. They sound so

interesting though, that no one detects this. No one, that is except the reporters and a few critics. This sort of thing gives the reporters a problem. Should they finish these sentences or cut them out altogether. But stop. The ethics of journalism are dangerous ground.

468—*Value of Pause*

The hardest thing is to learn how to pause. It requires great self control. Many speakers rush from sentence to sentence as if they feared that a pause signified a breakdown. A pause rightly timed before a word or phrase is a very effective form of emphasis. It will almost certainly guarantee your getting attention. Furthermore it will give you a chance of beginning the next sentence quietly. Don't speak in a droning voice and don't over-emphasise a point by too much repetition. We remember a speaker committing both of these errors. He was addressing a conference and in a very monotonous voice he said: "I am never tired—I am never tired." Then he got what was coming to him. Some of the audience who had been enduring this sort of thing for some minutes yelled out "No, but we are."

469—*Hold Your Audience*

You must *try* to hold the audience throughout your speech. If you find them slipping and becoming unsettled, and if you feel you have spoken long enough, finish as quickly as you can. Look about your audience. Seek a sympathetic face in this section or that, in the front seats and in the back. Then speak to them and see whether they are taken it in. Another method is to address a section of the audience as if it were a single person. Then turn from that section to another part and address it. If you find a point

has been missed, repeat it in different words. Remember you are seeking to convince and to persuade the audience just as you would seek to persuade a single person. Queen Victoria used to complain that Gladstone addressed her in private as though she were a public meeting. Invert Gladstone's method, and address an audience with the same intentness of purpose with which you would speak to a single person whom you were anxious to convert.

470—*Don't Pose*

Avoid mannerisms. Don't pose. Just stand up straight with your shoulders back. Don't stick your hands in your pockets. Try to forget them and yourself as soon as you can. Don't stamp about the platform, but move easily. Look as if you were not clamped to the floor with your limbs shackled. A gesture should be natural and it will probably be so with you if you leave your hands free. Don't point with your forefinger too much. If you find that any particular gesture is becoming an obsession with you try to cut it out.

471—*Speak Deliberately*

Don't speak too quickly and don't use big words if you can find small ones which will suit the purpose. This is easier said than done. English is a very precise language and the more you know about it the more likely you are to search for the right word. Sarcasm and raillery are dangerous weapons to use. But in debate you may be driven to them. A few funny stories or anecdotes may be kept on hand. But make them brief and don't drag them in by the hair of the head to illustrate your point.

472—*Cut Out Figures*

The use of statistics and figures generally should be avoided. They don't usually sink home. You must find some more graphic way of getting it over. Think out some way of doing this beforehand.

473—*Talk to Them*

Try to *talk* to your audience rather than to deliver an oration. In the latter case people may admire you, but they won't understand you. Lord Macaulay said of a certain politician that his speeches were essays declaimed. Don't make your speech into an essay. Lord Baldwin said that oratory is the harlot of the Arts. Plain robust commonsense in speech is better than the gaudiest flowers of rhetoric. Sincerity will carry conviction where eloquence will fail. A speech without sincerity is like a song without soul. It stirs no depth of feeling.

474—*Memorise This*

Remember this little rhyme of the Rev. John Liefchild :—

*“ Begin low, speak slow ;
Take fire, rise higher :
When most impressed
Be self-possessed :
At the end wax warm,
And sit down in a storm.”*

Then read this extract from Hamlet's advice to the players :—

HAMLET : Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue : but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus ; but

use all gently : for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise : I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant ; it out-herods Herod : pray you, avoid it.

FIRST PLAYER : I warrant your honour.

HAMLET : Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action ; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature : for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve ; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

Not all of it is applicable to speeches perhaps, but most of it will be worth your consideration. If you want to study debate you might do worse than read Schopenhauer's "Art of Controversy." It will tell you most of the tricks.

475—*Summary of Chapter Sixteen*

Chairman should make himself an authority on the rules and standing orders. Should always have Agenda. Be fearless, impartial, and careful on details. Should not talk too much and if taking part as a disputant should leave the chair temporarily. Should use casting vote discriminatingly. If audience demands a certain speaker, accept their decision ungrudgingly. Must not rule out any legitimate amendment, or motion will be invalid. Members should take a thorough interest in meetings, and help Chairman wherever possible. If you disagree with his method have quiet talk with him afterwards. All speakers cannot expect to be orators, but fluency will come with practice. Always prepare, read everything and write speech out if necessary, but do not read it to audience. Do not try to memorise wording and keep mind free to improvise. Clear notes will help you to keep sequence. Catch ideas when they are fresh and put them down. If mouth is dry relax lower jaw before speaking. Do not drink too much water. Take a few deep breaths, start low and speak very distinctly, articulating every syllable. If you lose your point just keep on talking; it will come back. Do not over-emphasise by too much repetition. Look out for a sympathetic face or two and address them. Avoid mannerisms; do not stand like a poker. Use small words where possible, do not gabble, and do not overdo the sarcasm. Do not use figures if you can avoid them; better to illustrate by word-pictures. Remember sincerity will convince where rhetoric will fail.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Paragraphs 476—498

A Peep at Parliament

In which we take a look into the labyrinth of Parliamentary procedure. After first seeing that Members are properly returned, we see how a Bill starts on its journey through its first and second reading, committee, report, and third reading before going to the House of Lords, and how it is finally passed and becomes law.

476—*The Life of Parliament*

Parliamentary procedure is very intricate, hedged round as it is with traditions, precedents and privileges. Volumes have been written about it, and all we can do here is to take a hasty glance to see how it works. Parliament consists of two chambers, (1) the House of Lords, and (2) the House of Commons. The House of Lords, as everyone knows, is an hereditary chamber, whereas the Commons is elected by the people. The powers of the Lords have been progressively curtailed and the Commons is the real legislative chamber. The procedure of each differs somewhat on details, and we confine our description to the House of Commons. The life of Parliament was limited to five years by the Parliament Act of 1911. But unlike mankind, Parliament has the power to prolong its own life. In practice it seldom lasts the full five years, and is dissolved by the King on the advice of his Ministers, usually about the end of the fourth session. A session generally begins in November and lasts a year.

477—*Summoning New Parliament*

The King in dissolving Parliament issues a proclamation announcing the dissolution, and fixing a date for the new one to meet. An Order in Council is then published instructing the Lord Chancellor to issue the necessary writs of summons for the new Parliament. Two kinds of writs are issued, one for the House of Lords and one for the House of Commons. Assured of their seats, all that most of the Peers have to do is to wait for the opening of Parliament. All Scottish and Irish Peers, however, are not eligible to sit in the House of Lords. Sixteen representative Scottish Peers are elected for each Parliament by their fellows, and there are twenty-eight representative Irish Peers elected for life. But Members of the

Commons must, if they wish to be returned, stand as candidates for election in some Parliamentary division or constituency. In other words a general election must be held to choose the 615 Members who are to compose the legislature for the next few years. Writs issued by the Lord Chancellor are sent to the Returning Officers who conduct the elections. These duties are performed in Counties by the Sheriffs and in Boroughs by the Mayors. These officers must give public notice of the receipt of the writ, and name a day for receiving nominations. If more than one candidate is nominated, a poll is necessary. A day is then fixed for an election by ballot vote.

478—*The General Election*

Each candidate must be proposed by at least two voters in the constituency for which he stands. The political parties manage all this and usually have had a "prospective" candidate in the field for a long time, provided with an election agent to look after the details of the campaign. Candidates having been duly nominated, meetings are held, speeches are made and voters are canvassed. Electors visit the polling booths, mark a cross on the ballot paper opposite the name of their chosen candidate, and put the paper in the ballot box. When the polls are closed, the papers are counted under the supervision of the Returning Officer, who declares elected the candidate with the highest number of votes. The Returning Officer has a casting vote should there be a tie. He then makes a *return* to the Lord Chancellor giving the name of the candidate who has been elected.

479—*Choosing The Government*

From the days of William III., it has been the practice for the King to choose his Ministers from the political party whose members have been returned in the

largest numbers. He does this on the advice of the leader of the successful party, who has already prepared a list of those he desires should serve as Ministers. The leader almost invariably becomes the *first* or Prime Minister, and it is through him that the King is informed of the view of his Ministers. From the general body of the Ministers, the Prime Minister selects his Cabinet, which is the inner circle and *real* Government of the country. It is the Ministers' job to take charge of the various sections of the Government's work which is carried on through Departments of State. As the general election has been fought on a political programme, it is the job of the Cabinet to try to carry this into effect (or to find subtle excuses for not carrying out its promises). Whatever compound ultimately is decided upon, emerges in a statement of policy read by the King from the Throne on the opening of Parliament.

480—Opening of Parliament

On the first day of the new Parliament the Members of the House of Commons are summoned to the House of Lords, where the Lord Chancellor informs them that it is His Majesty's intention to address both Houses. They are then instructed to appoint a Speaker, whose duty it is to preside over the House of Commons, and to act as their spokesman. Back troop the Members to the Commons, elect Mr. Speaker, conduct him to his Chair, put the Mace on the table, and then go home for the day. Usually, next day the Speaker marches through the corridor in procession to the House of Lords, where his appointment is obligingly approved by the Lord Chancellor on behalf of the King. A few days later the King opens Parliament with imposing ceremony, reads his address from the Throne in the House of Lords, whence the Members of the Commons have been summoned to listen to it. Then Members troop back, conduct some formal business to show

how independent they are of the Crown, and the Speaker reads the King's speech from the Chair. Votes of thanks for the address are moved, seconded and passed, which gives the opportunity to criticise the failings of the Government. After this the House is ready to embark on its work for the session.

481—*Business of the House*

The House meets at 2-45 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and 11 a.m. on Fridays. It carries on with its normal business until 11 p.m. on the first four days, after which unopposed business is taken until 11-30 or thereabouts. Then the attendants and police are heard shouting through the corridors "Who goes home?" to assure any remote Members that the House has adjourned. On Fridays business ceases normally at 4 p.m. We say normally because Members often work a substantial amount of unpaid overtime, and not infrequently indulge in all-night sittings to prove their zeal in the public interest. Outside the normal hours, Members are quite free to spend their leisure in answering correspondence, receiving deputations, or hearing grievances from disgruntled constituents (who in all probability have voted against the Member). At week-ends they may enjoy themselves addressing public meetings, opening bazaars, sitting on committees of bodies with which they are connected, or doing any little odd jobs in their constituency—in short, having a really restful time of it.

482—*Order of Business*

The agenda of business is set down in the following order, (1) oral presentation of petitions, (2) Private Bills, (3) questions to Ministers, (4) requests for leave to move the adjournment, (5) matters taken at the commencement of public business and (6) orders of

the day and notices of motion. Petitions have still to be written out and cannot be typed or printed. They take up very little of the time of the House. If any Private Bill is opposed it is postponed until 7-30 p.m., when its promoters may find other and more urgent matters have crowded it out. They must then wait for another opportunity. A mass of questions usually fills the order paper, as notice must always be given to the Ministers concerned. But only those marked by the Member with an asterisk receive a verbal answer. Requests for leave to move the adjournment are treated as described in paragraph 181. Item 5 includes such matters as motions for the appointment of select committees, and government motions relating to the business of the House. The real legislative work consists of orders of the day, and notices of motion. The former is another name for business which it has been previously decided shall be taken on a particular day. This business mainly consists of Public Bills.

483—*Procedure on Legislation*

It may be of interest to outline what takes place in the process of passing a Bill into law. The subject is far too involved for us to do more than touch the rudiments of this complicated job. The first stage is to introduce a Bill. There are three distinct types, (1) Public Bills, (2) Money Bills, and (3) Private Bills. The procedure is different in all three cases. *Public Bills* are those which are introduced to alter the general law. They may be brought in by a Minister or by a private Member. *Money Bills* deal with finance only, but it is sometimes difficult to say whether a bill is a Money Bill or not. Some parts may deal with money and some parts may not, a sort of *hybrid* bill as it were. Every Money Bill has to be certified as such by the Speaker, who gives his certificate after receiving advice from a panel of members. When

a Bill is so certified the power of the House of Lords regarding it are limited. It is the exclusive right of the House of Commons to grant money.

484—Private Bill

The term "Private Bill" is confusing. One would think it means a Bill brought in by a private member. It doesn't mean that at all. A *Private Bill* is one which is not intended to alter the law *generally*, but to alter it only in some *particular locality* or for some *comparatively narrow* purpose. For example, a railway company may wish to secure the right to acquire land compulsorily, or a Local Authority may wish to do something which it cannot do under its existing powers. In both cases they would have to proceed by means of a Private Bill. The procedure is a special one, and very complicated, involving parliamentary agents (usually lawyers whose job it is to arrange such matters), and is far removed from the subject we wish to explain. We shall, therefore, concentrate our attention upon the procedure as it relates to Public Bills; in other words legislation which affects everybody.

485—How to Introduce a Bill

Public Bills are taken in five stages: (1) First Reading, (2) Second Reading, (3) Committee stage, (4) Report stage, (5) Third Reading. A Member who wishes to introduce a Bill has two alternative courses open to him. The first is purely formal. All he has to do is to visit the Public Bill Office and obtain a "parchment dummy," write the title of the Bill on the back of this paper, put in his own name and those of other Members who support it, and hand it to the Clerk of the House after question time. The Clerk reads aloud the title of the Bill and by doing so has given the Bill its First Reading.

486—*Ten Minutes Rule*

The second course open to a Member is to bring in his Bill under the 10 minutes' rule. If he chooses this method he doesn't even need to hand in a dummy. He simply gets up after question time and asks the permission of the House to introduce his Bill. He can make a 10 minute speech explaining his measure. Another Member is then allowed to reply in a short speech, but no one else can intervene at this stage, and the House must then make up its mind whether it wants the bill or not. Usually a vote is taken by Members marching into the division lobbies and voting "aye" or "no." If the Members decide against the Bill it is finished with. Very few Bills get through by this channel, but it is a useful method of propaganda.

487—*Second Reading*

After the formal First Reading has been got through, the Bill is printed and the names of the Members supporting it appear on its back. When the day for the Second Reading arrives, the Member in charge of the Bill commences by saying: "I beg to move that the bill be now read a second time." He then proceeds to expatiate on the merits of the Bill. Usually he is followed, not by a seconder as might be expected, but by an opponent. The act of seconding is regarded as a formal one, and is covered by the printing of the names of the supporters on the back of the Bill. The debate at this stage is confined to general principles. Matters of detail are not gone into except in so far as they may illustrate the principles of the Bill. In addition to speaking and voting against a Bill, there are other ways of showing opposition. An amendment may be moved by any Member, to leave out the word "now" from the original motion, and to add at the end "Upon this day six months hence." If the amendment is seconded and ultimately carried the effect is to reject the Bill.

488—*Rejecting A Bill*

It is always assumed by a Parliamentary fiction that six months from the date of the amendment the House will not be in session. Consequently, the Bill could not possibly be read six months hence. In such case, the original motion if amended would appear: "That the Bill be read a second time upon this date six months hence." This is only a polite way of saying, "We want to throw out this Bill." *Three* months may be inserted instead of *six* months as an alternative but the result is the same. This amendment is, as will be seen, simply a rejection of the Bill without stating any reasons. No detailed amendments can be accepted until *after* the second reading, but there still remains another kind of amendment which, while rejecting the Bill, sets out the reasons for doing so. This is called a *reasoned* amendment, an example of which we gave in paragraph 106. On practically all Government Bills affecting wide public issues, the reasoned amendment is the device adopted by the Opposition.

489—*Speaker Puts Question*

When the debate is concluded the Speaker puts the question: "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question." This jargon means that the motion remains as originally drafted, and that no alteration be made in it. The Speaker, after putting the question, says: "As many as are of that opinion say 'aye.'" The 'ayes' lustily respond, and the Speaker judges the volume of sound. Then he says, "as many as are of the contrary opinion say 'no.'" Then the "noes" have their turn. Then the Speaker may say "I *think* the 'noes' have it." He then makes a pause to allow anyone to challenge this opinion. If the opinion is unchallenged he says decisively "So the 'noes' have it." If, however, his opinion is challenged, he then directs the lobby to be cleared in

preparation for a division. Then he waits a further two minutes, puts the question a second time and again declares that he *thinks* the "noes" have it. If this is challenged, a second time, a division is taken and the Speaker directs the "ayes" to go into the right lobby and the "noes" into the left lobby.

490—Members Divide

As the Members enter the lobbies their names are taken by the Clerks, and they are counted by Tellers as they pass out of the lobbies. Two Tellers each have been appointed by the opposing Parties. One Teller for the "noes," and one Teller for the "ayes" stand side by side at each lobby. Six minutes after the division lobbies are ordered to be cleared, the doors are locked and no other Members can enter. The Tellers then come forward, give the figures to the Clerk, who, in turn, hands them to the senior Teller of the Party which has gained the majority, who thereupon reports them to the Speaker. The Speaker then declares the result to the House.

491—Second Reading Decisive

The Second Reading is really decisive in the life of the Bill. If the Bill gets through this, there are hopes for it. True, it may be amended during the Committee and Report stages, and it may be defeated on the Third Reading. But usually, the House expresses its mind on the Second Reading. It should be noted that amendments to the actual *wording* of the Bill, cannot be moved on Second Reading. That comes later when the Bill has reached the next stage of its treatment, namely, in Committee. The only question before the House on Second Reading is whether the Bill shall be read *now* a Second time. It is only an amendment to

that motion which can be moved. The House at this stage is not determining whether particular clauses of the Bill are good or bad. All it is called upon to decide, is whether the Bill is sufficiently worthy of consideration to be remitted to Committee for detailed examination.

492—*The Committee Stage*

If the Bill successfully emerges from the Second Reading it next enters upon the Committee stage. There are several different kinds of committees to which it can be sent. If it is a Bill dealing with matters of vital public importance, in all probability it will be dealt with by a Committee of the whole House, as described in paragraph 220. Attention at this stage is concentrated upon the *details* of every clause, and indeed upon every line and word. Members may speak in Committee as many times as they can get the floor, but usually the speeches are much shorter than on Second Reading. Because of the congestion of business, several Standing Committees of between 30 and 50 Members, representative of the different parties, have been set up. To them is remitted, after Second Reading, the task of examining and amending such Bills as are not dealt with by a Committee of the whole House. The procedure in a Standing Committee is almost exactly the same as in a Committee of the whole House, and each Standing Committee is, in effect, a miniature of the House of Commons itself. By means of these Committees, several Bills can be taken concurrently, one being remitted to Standing Committee A, another to Standing Committee B, and so on. Bills which concern Scotland only are sent to a separate Committee consisting of all the Members for Scottish constituencies.

493—*Amending a Bill*

Notice of amendments are handed into the table after the Bill has received its Second Reading. They are then printed and circulated to Members. The amendments follow the usual form of (1) to omit certain words, (2) to insert certain words, (3) to omit certain words in order to insert certain other words. The clauses of the Bill are numbered, and the Chairman calls each in its proper turn. If amendments are moved these are taken in the strict order in which they occur. Thus an amendment to the *first* line of the Bill, would be taken before an amendment to the *second* line, or later parts of the clause. Further, if an amendment affected only the first part of the first line, it would take precedence and be moved before an amendment to the second half of the first line. There is some qualification to this. Not every amendment need be called by the Chairman. He can select the amendments by the "Kangaroo" process described in Paragraph 164. The usual rules as to amendments are followed in so far that amendments must be relevant; must not be inconsistent with previous decisions; must not make the clause unintelligible, and must not be frivolous. The Chairman can refuse to put any such amendments.

494—*Motion Takes Precedence*

When the debate has concluded, the question is put to the vote. The question on amendments to omit words, and amendments to omit *certain* words in order to *insert* other words, is put in this form: "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause." Precedence is thus given to the *clause*, which is in reality the original motion. Where, however, the amendment is to *insert* words *only* in the clause, and to omit nothing, the question is put: "That those words be there inserted" This is the only case in

which an amendment is given precedence over the original motion in House of Commons procedure. If the amendment is accepted, the Chairman puts the question finally that, "The clause, as amended, stand a part of the Bill." When all existing clauses have been considered, it is possible whilst still in Committee, to move entirely *new* clauses to be *added* to the Bill. New clauses go through much the same process as the Bill itself, i.e., they have to have their First and Second Reading. The First Reading is met by the Member giving notice of his desire to move the clause. The next stage is reached when the Member actually moves his new clause in committee. When he has done this, amendments may be moved, and after the matter has been debated, the question is put that the clause be read a second time. If this is defeated the clause is finished with. If it is agreed to, amendments may then be moved to the new clause. Finally, the question on the new clause in its original or amended form is put: "That the clause be added to the Bill."

495—Report Stage

Once the Committee stage has been concluded, the Bill is *reported* by the Chairman back to the House. If the Bill has *not* been amended in Committee it may be read a Third time forthwith. If the Bill, however, has been materially amended, it must be reprinted, and on the Report Stage it may be still further amended. *New* clauses may be moved to it, and in this case they are taken before any amendments to the *existing* clauses. This is just the reverse of the practice which was followed in Committee. No amendment can be moved on the Report Stage, which could have been taken in Committee, unless the House gives its consent. On the Report Stage members can usually only speak once, except the Member who is in charge of the Bill, or a Member who has moved a new clause, or an amendment. If the House is still not satisfied with

the Bill, it may order it to be sent back to Committee. Or the House may turn itself into a Committee of the whole House. This power to recommit a Bill, applies also even when it has reached the Third Reading Stage. At the end of the debate once again the question is put "that the Bill, as amended, be reported to the House."

496—Third Reading

The Bill now comes before the House, in its original or amended form for the *third* time, when a general discussion on broad details, very much like that on Second Reading, takes place. The tendency in recent years has been for the Third Reading to become of less importance than formerly. By the time the Bill has reached this stage, the members are heartily sick of it, and are glad to send it to the House of Lords. A motion is proposed by the member in charge of the Bill "That the Bill be now read a Third time." The same procedure as was followed on *Second* Reading may ensue, and a member may move to delete the word "now" and insert "upon this day six months." By the time the Bill has got so far, however, such an amendment is not very likely to succeed. *Verbal* amendments only may be made on Third Reading, and if the motion is passed, the Bill is remitted to the House of Lords.

497—Bill Goes to Lords

We need not follow it any further on its tortuous journey. If it is a Government Bill upon which the House of Lords smiles it may have no difficulty. If the Lords are hostile they may amend the Bill and send it back to the Commons. The Commons may then (A) agree with the Lords' amendments or (B) may decide to put the Bill off for three to six months, or (C) may resolve that the Bill will be laid aside or (D) may state that they disagree with the Lords' amendments. If the House disagrees with the Lords'

amendment, a Committee is appointed which drafts the reasons prompting the House in its decision, and the message is communicated to the Lords accordingly. If the Lords insist upon their amendments and the House still disagrees, the Bill must be passed through three successive sessions of the Commons. The Lords cannot then reject it, nor can they interfere with a Finance Bill at any stage. After passing the Lords, a Bill receives the Royal Assent and becomes law.

498—*Summary of Chapter Seventeen*

Parliament consists of two chambers : (a) House of Lords and (b) House of Commons. Members of Commons elected by constituencies. Life of Parliament restricted to five years, but power to extend. Leader of successful party chooses Cabinet which is the real Government. King's speech prepared by Cabinet. Parliament assembles in Lords to hear speech read. Speech outlines Government policy for session. House of Commons meets at 2-45 p.m. usually, and 11 a.m. on Fridays. Adjourns soon after 11 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Fridays. Agenda set out on order paper. Questions requiring verbal answer from Ministers must be marked with asterisk. Orders of day and notices of motion furnish the main business. There are three kinds of Bills : (1) Public, (2) Money, and (3) Private. Public Bills affect general law. Private Bills concern law in particular localities or certain matters only. Public Bill may be introduced (a) as a dummy or (b) under ten minutes' rule. Second Reading finishes debate on general principles. Amendments for rejection or reasoned amendments only taken. If general principles of Bill agreed or approved after division, Bill referred to Committee when detailed amendments taken. New clauses may be then added. After Committee Stage Bill *reported* to House, when it may be still further amended and new clauses added or Bill may be sent back to Committee. If approved, Bill thereupon reported to House for Third Reading when general principles may again be debated. Rejection still possible, but if agreed, Bill goes to Lords who, if they oppose, may send it back to Commons with amendments. If Commons disagree with Lords, Committee states why. If Lords insist on amendments, Bill if passed in three successive sessions, becomes law in spite of them. Lords cannot interfere with a Money Bill.

APPENDICES

Branch Procedure at a Glance

The numbers in the second column are inserted merely as a reference to avoid repeating the words in the column headed "Procedure."

ITEM.	REF.	PROCEDURE.
A. Commencement	1	Quorum must be present.
	2	Chairman declares meeting open.
	3	Secretary reads notice convening meeting.
	4	Chairman reads the Agenda.
B. Minutes.	5	Secretary reads the minutes.
	6	Motion taken confirming same.
	7	No discussion except on their accuracy.
	8	Amended if inaccurate or incomplete.
	9	Chairman signs minutes and initials corrections.
C. Correspondence	10	Secretary reads correspondence as a whole.
	11	Questions allowed on matters arising.
	12	Motions and amendments moved.
	13	Correspondence finally passed as read ; or,
	14	Letters are grouped in subject order and each subject treated as a separate item.
D. Motions.	15	Must be worded in affirmative and moved and seconded.
	16	Chairman reads motion and enquires whether wording is accurate.
	17	No alteration or withdrawal except by unanimous consent.
	18	Discussion then follows.
	19	Members allowed one "speech" only.
	20	Chairman decides who has "got the floor."
	21	Mover replies at the end of the debate.
	22	Chairman reads the motion and puts the question.
E. Amendments	23	See 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Amendment raises a new issue.
	24	When there are several amendments, taken in sequence and separately.
	25	Mover of original motion replies at end of discussion.
	26	Amendment read and put to the vote.
	27	Process repeated on further amendments.
	28	Survivor put to vote finally as a substantive motion.
F. Closing Debate.	29	Chairman may ask : " Are you ready to vote ? "
	30	Motion : " That the question be now put," may be moved at any time.
	31	When moved as an amendment, applies to it only.
	32	Put without discussion.
	33	If defeated, period must elapse before being again moved.

ITEM.	REF.	PROCEDURE.
Special G. Committee Reports.	34	First motion should approve the general policy.
	35	May be amended by (a) reference back, (b) postponing consideration, or (c) referring it to another committee.
	36	If policy is approved, each paragraph is moved and put separately.
	37	Amendments then on details only.
	38	Final motion: "That the report (as amended) be approved," put without discussion.
H. Executive and District Reports	39	First read in full to the branch, and accepted as read.
	40	Questions and amendments on policy allowed.
	41	Reports must be acted upon despite motions, until altered by controlling body. (See 37.)
I. Branch Committee Reports.	42	See 39, 40, 35, 38.
J. Delegations.	43	See 39, 40, 38.
K. Previous Question.	44	Not allowed on amendment or in committee.
	45	Treated like an amendment, and limited discussion permissible, but undesirable
	46	If carried, motion is shelved indefinitely.
	47	If lost, motion is immediately put to the vote. (See 33.)
L. Next Business.	48	May be moved at any time.
	49	See 44 and 45.
	50	If lost, discussion proceeds. (See 33.)
M. Points of Order	51	Member raising must prove (a) irrelevancy, or (b) unparliamentary language, or (c) transgression of rules, or ask question on procedure.
	52	Must be raised immediately and put briefly.
	53	Time taken must not encroach on speaker's allowance.
	54	Points of explanation in special cases only.
Adjournment of N. Meeting or Debate.	55	Where moved to shelve a question, no discussion or amendment is allowed. Otherwise open to amendment.
	56	See 46.
	57	When adjournment of debate is carried, debate resumed on date specified.
	58	If no date mentioned, main question is shelved.
	59	Adjournment of meeting supersedes main question.
	60	Adjournment of meeting may also be moved as a motion when no other question is under discussion.
	61	When carried, Chairman declares meeting closed.
	62	See 33.

DIAGRAM OF PROCEDURE—I

Procedure on a motion which is not, by any cause, prevented from being put to the vote.

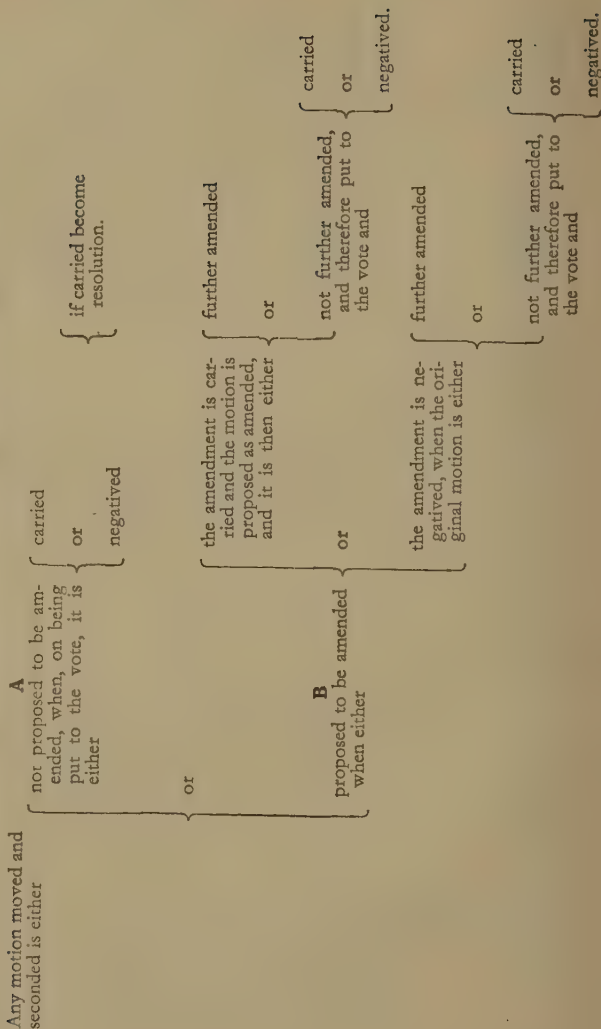
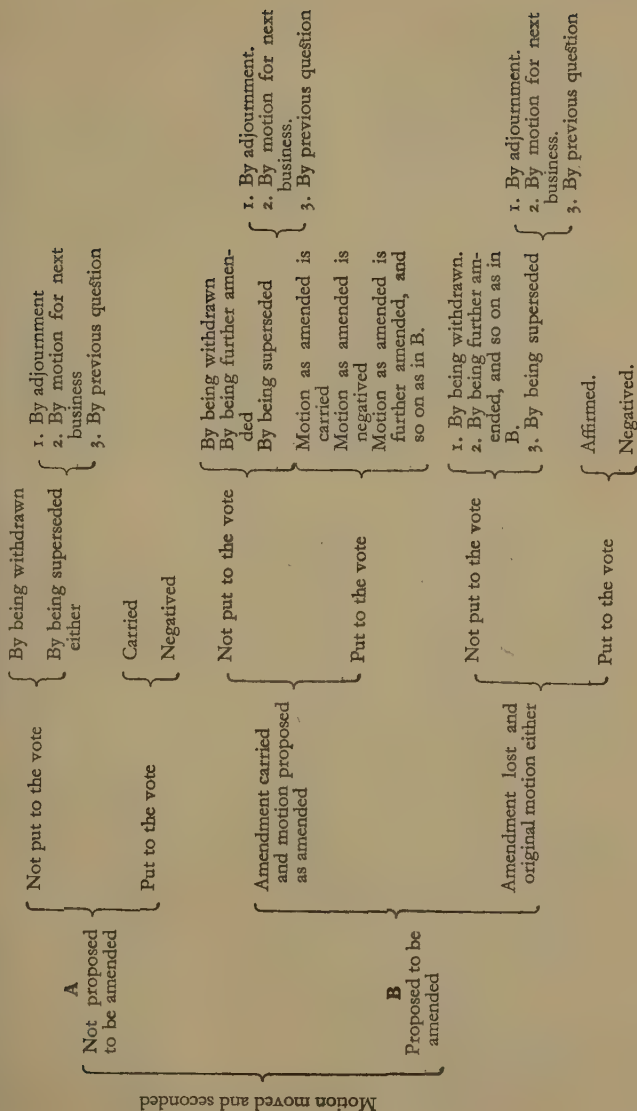


DIAGRAM OF PROCEDURE—II

Procedure on a Motion in any Event.



Words and Terms Used in Debate

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION.

The long (marked) vowels are pronounced as in the following words: fāte, fāre, fār, mē, mīne, mōte, mūte.

The short vowels which include all not marked as above, are pronounced as in the following words: pat, pet, pit, pot, put.

The accented syllable in each word is indicated by a dash being placed immediately after it.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Ab origine	<i>ab or-ī-jin-ē</i> . . .	From the commencement.
Acoustics	<i>a-kūs-tiks</i>	Sound properties of Hall, etc.
Addendum (Plural Addenda)	<i>ad-den'dum</i>	An amendment to add words.
Ad hoc	<i>ad hock</i>	For a particular purpose.
Ad infinitum	<i>ad in-fī-nī-tum</i> . . .	To infinity
Ad interim	<i>ad in'ter-im</i>	Meanwhile
Adjournment		Postponement.
Ad libitum	<i>ad lib'it-um</i>	At pleasure.
Ad nauseam	<i>ad naw'se-am</i>	To disgust.
Ad valorem	<i>ad va-lor'em</i>	According to the value.
A fortiori	<i>ā for-shi-or'ī</i>	With stronger reason.
Agenda	<i>a-jen'da</i>	List of items of business.
Aggregate Meeting		Full meeting of members.
Amended Motion		Original motion after being amended.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Amendment		Proposition to change a constitution, Bill, or motion.
Amendment, Counter.		Substitute for original motion.
A posteriori	<i>ā pos-tē-ri-or'ī.</i>	From the effect to the cause.
A priori	<i>ā pri-or'ī</i>	From cause to the effect.
Appendix		Supplementary matter at end of report.
Ballot		Method of secret voting.
Ballot Scrutineer		Supervisor of Ballot Vote.
Biennial Conference	<i>bī-en'i-al</i>	Conference held every two years.
Bill		Legislative measure introduced into Parliament.
Black-Balling		Usually to vote against a candidate.
Block vote		Voting by card. Each carry a stated number of votes.
Blue Book		Government publication or report so called because of the colour of its cover.
Bona fide	<i>bō'-na fī'dē</i>	In good faith.
By-election		A Parliamentary election, between the General Elections, to fill a vacancy.
Candidate		One nominated for any position.
Card vote		See block vote.
Casting vote		Deciding vote—usually given to Chairman.
Catching the Chairman's eye.		Obtaining permission to speak.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Clause		Part of a Bill or document.
Closure	<i>klō'xur</i>	Method of closing debate.
Coalition	<i>kō'a-lish'on</i>	Temporary combination between political parties.
Command paper		Document ordered to be printed for Parliament. Marked C.M.D.
Committee		Body appointed to consider a subject.
Composite motion		Comprehensive motion made up of several motions.
Conference Arrangements Committee.		Body appointed to facilitate speedy transaction of business.
Constituency		Body of voters who elect a representative member.
Counter amendment		Substitute for entire original motion.
 Data	 <i>dā'ta</i>	 Facts : information.
De facto	<i>dē fac'to</i>	That which is fact, as opposed to that which is legal.
De jure	<i>dē jū're</i>	By legal right.
De novo	<i>dē-nō'vō</i>	Starting afresh.
Delegate		Person invested with limited powers to represent others.
Deputation		Body usually appointed to interview others.
Dilatory motion	<i>dil'a-tori</i>	One which delays action.
Disputant		Participant in a discussion or controversy.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Dissolution		The disbanding of committee or assembly, especially Parliament before a General Election.
Divide et impera . . .	<i>dī'vi-dē et im'-per-ā.</i>	Divide and govern.
Division		Vote taken on motion or Bill.
Erratum	<i>e-rā'tum</i>	Error in printing or writing.
Et cetera	<i>et-set-er-a</i>	&c., or etc. And so forth.
Ex cathedra	<i>ex kat'h'e-drā</i> . . .	From the chair, i.e., with authority.
Ex officio	<i>ex of-fish'iō</i>	By virtue of office.
Ex parte	<i>ex par'te</i>	One side.
Exhaustive vote		Voting by rounds, eliminating a candidate at each.
Fac simile	<i>fak sim'-il-e</i>	Identical with ; an exact copy.
"Gagging"		Preventing from speaking.
"Getting the floor"		Obtaining right to speak.
Gratis	<i>grā-tiss</i>	Free ; for nothing.
Grouping Committee		One which arranges several motions on one subject into a composite motion.
Guillotine	<i>gil'o-tīn</i>	Automatic closure by timetable.
Heckling		To question sharply and critically.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
I bidem	<i>ibī'-dem</i>	In the same place.
I ^d em	<i>ī-dem</i>	The same.
In camera	<i>in cam-era</i>	In private
In extenso	<i>in exten'sō</i>	At full length.
Interim Report	<i>in'ter-im</i>	A preliminary report giving progress up to date.
I ^p so facto	<i>ip'sō fak'to</i>	In the fact itself.
J ournal		Daily record. Minute Book of House of Commons.
K angaroo	<i>kan'ga-rū'</i>	System of selecting chief amendments and leaping over others.
L abor omnia vincit	<i>lab'or om'ni-a vin'sit</i>	Labour conquers all things.
Locus standi	<i>lok'us stan'di</i>	Right to take part in a discussion.
M ace	<i>mās</i>	Symbol of Speaker's authority in House of Commons.
Main Question, The		The principal issue before the meeting.
Mala fide	<i>mā'lā fī'dē.</i>	In bad faith.
Mandate	<i>man'dāte</i>	Express authority.
Mass Meeting		Meeting of whole membership.
Metaphor	<i>met'a-for</i>	A figure of speech.
Minutes		A brief record of business transacted.
Modus operandi	<i>mōd'us operan'di</i>	The manner of operation.
Motion		Any proposition put in a deliberative assembly.
Multum in parvo	<i>mul-tum in par'-vō.</i>	Much in little.
Mutatis mutandis	<i>mū-ta'tis mū-tan'dis</i>	With necessary changes.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Naming of members		Calling member by name, as a preliminary to suspension.
Nem. con. (abbreviation for "nemine Contradicente").	<i>nem'-in-e contra-dī-sent'e</i>	No one speaking in opposition.
Nem. dis. (abbreviation for "nemine dissentiente").	<i>nem'in-e dis-sen-shi-en'te.</i>	Without a dissenting voice.
Ne plus ultra	<i>nē plus ul'trā</i>	None better ; perfection
"Next business"		A motion to close debate, but avoiding a decision.
Nil desperandum	<i>nil des-per-an'dum</i>	Never despair.
Nominate		Propose for election.
Obiter dictum (plural: Obiter dicta).	<i>ob'it-er dik'tum</i> <i>ob'it-er dik'ta.</i>	A thing said by the way ; incidentally.
Omnibus Motion		Comprehensive motion.
Opposition		Party in Parliament opposed to Government.
Orders of the Day		Agenda of House of Commons.
Original motion		First motion brought forward on any subject.
Pari passu	<i>par'i pass'ū</i>	In equal proportion.
Per annum		By the year.
Per contra	<i>per con'tra</i>	On the contrary.
Peroration	<i>per'o-rā'shon</i>	The concluding passage of a speech.
Pious motion		A motion merely expressing an opinion.
Poll	<i>pōl</i>	Counting of voters at elections.
Preamble	<i>prē'am'bul</i>	Wording at beginning of document or Bill outlining its object.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Precedent	<i>pres'i-dent</i>	Case taken as example for subsequent cases.
"Previous Question"		Motion to close debate by avoiding a vote.
Prima facie	<i>prī'mā fā'sē</i>	On the surface.
Private meeting		An assembly of persons from which the public is excluded.
Pro bono publico	<i>prō bōnō pub'li-kō</i>	For the public good.
Programme of business		Agenda.
Pro rata	<i>prō rā'ta</i>	Proportionally.
Prorogation	<i>prō'ro-gā'shon</i>	Terminating a session, especially of Parliament.
Proxy	<i>proks'y</i>	Acting by a deputy or other representative.
Public meeting		An assembly to which members of the public are admissible, even though held on private premises.
Quasi	<i>kwā'sī</i>	Semi, partly, as it were.
Question		Issue raised by Motion or Amendment.
Quid pro quo	<i>kwid prō kwō</i>	Compensation for a service.
Quorum	<i>kwōr'um</i>	Number that must be present to make proceedings valid.
Record vote		Taken by Roll Call.
Reductio ad absurdum	<i>re-duk'shi-o ad ab-surd'um.</i>	Reducing a position to an absurdity.
"Reference Back"		Amendment by which report is sent back for further consideration to body responsible for drafting.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Remit		Words defining matters entrusted to a Committee or body.
Representative		One authorised to act on behalf of others.
Resolution		Motion passed by a meeting.
Returning Officer		Local official who after a Parliamentary Election <i>Returns</i> the result to the Lord Chancellor
Rhetoric	<i>ret'o-rik</i>	The art of persuasion by eloquent speech.
Rider		An amendment to add words. An addendum.
"Right of reply"		Privilege, customarily allowed to the mover of an original motion.
Rostrum	<i>ros'trum</i>	Special platform or stand for public speaking.
Schedule	<i>skej'ul</i> or <i>shed-ul</i>	Appendix to a document or Act.
Scrutineer	<i>skrū'ti-nēr</i>	Person supervising ballot.
Secretariat	<i>sek're-te'ri-at</i>	Group of officers associated with Secretary.
Section		A separate part of Act of Parliament.
Select Committee		Body of Members specially selected by Parliament.
Session		Sitting or Meeting. Period (usually one in a year) between opening and prorogation of Parliament.
Seriatim	<i>ser-i-ā'tim</i>	Point by point.
Sic	<i>sik</i>	Thus ; so. Used to call attention to a literary error.
Sine die.	<i>sīn'e dī'ē</i>	Without a day being appointed.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Sine qua non	<i>sīn'e kwā non</i>	An indispensable condition.
Speaker (Mr.)		Member who presides in House of Commons.
Standing Orders		Code of Rules stipulating manner in which business shall be conducted at a meeting.
Status quo	<i>stā'tus kwō</i>	As things stood before certain action was taken.
Status quo ante bellum	<i>stā'tus kwō an'te bell-um.</i>	The state in which things were before the war.
Sub judice	<i>sub jū'diss-e</i>	Still under consideration
Sub rosa	<i>sub rō'sā</i>	Under the rose ; privately.
Substantive.	<i>sub'stan-tiv</i>	Separate motion.
Teller	<i>tel'er</i>	Member appointed to count the votes cast otherwise than by ballot.
Tempus fugit	<i>tem'pus fū'jit</i>	Time flies.
Terms of reference		Words laying down scope of a special Committee or Inquiry
Ultra vires.	<i>ul'trā vī'res</i>	Beyond the powers possessed.
Verbatim	<i>ver-bā'tim</i>	Word for word.
Veto	<i>vē'tō</i>	To refuse approval.
Via media	<i>vī'a med'i-a</i>	A middle course.

TERM.	PRONUNCIATION.	MEANING.
Vice-Chairman.		Substitute Chairman.
Vice-versa	<i>vī'se ver'sa</i>	The position being reversed.
Viva voce	<i>vī'va vō'se</i>	By the living voice, by oral testimony.
White Paper		Government report or document, so called because of colour of its cover.
Writ		A summons or command. Sent to Returning Officer ordering him to hold a Parliamentary Election.

Suggested Standing Orders

1.—QUORUM.

Unless otherwise decided, all meetings shall begin at p.m. and end at.....p.m. members shall form a quorum. If within half-an-hour of the time appointed for the meeting to commence a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be dissolved.

2.—ORDER OF BUSINESS.

An Agenda shall be prepared by the Chairman and Secretary and shall be read by the Chairman at the opening of each meeting. All items thereon shall take precedence over all other business. Any member desirous of introducing business for the consideration of the meeting may do so after the business on the Agenda has been completed, but must reduce same to writing, or may give notice of motion to be discussed at a further meeting.

3.—SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

In the event of any matter or urgency, however, the Chairman may accept a motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders. The member moving such suspension must clearly state the nature and urgency of his business, the numbers of the Standing Orders affected, and the length of time (not exceeding 30 minutes) he desires such suspension to last. At the option of the meeting, a further extension may be allowed, but no suspension shall take place except by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present.

4.—MINUTES.

The Secretary shall read the Minutes of the previous meeting, but no motion or discussion shall be allowed on the Minutes except in regard to their accuracy. After the confirmation of the Minutes, they shall be signed by the Chairman, and the members

shall then be at liberty to ask any questions in regard to matters arising out of them. Such questions shall be allowed for purposes of information only, and no debate on the policy outlined in the Minutes shall take place.

5.—SELECTION OF SPEAKERS.

Every member shall stand when speaking, and shall address the Chairman as "Mr. Chairman." When more than one member rises to speak, the first to rise shall be given precedence, the decision resting with the Chairman, but the member who rose immediately after the first one shall have the right to speak at the close of such member's address.

6.—CHAIRMAN'S RULING.

If the Chairman rises to call a member to order, or for any other purpose connected with the proceedings, the member speaking shall thereon resume his seat, and no other member shall rise until the Chair be resumed. The ruling of the Chairman on any question under the Standing Orders, or on points of order or explanation, shall be final, unless challenged by not less than four members, and unless two-thirds of the members present vote to the contrary.

7.—INTERRUPTION.

If any member interrupts another while addressing the meeting, or uses abusive or profane language, or causes disturbance at any of the meetings, and refuses to obey the Chairman when called to order, he shall be named by the Chairman. He shall thereupon be expelled from the room and shall not be allowed to enter again until an apology satisfactory to the meeting be given. No member shall leave the meeting before its conclusion without the permission of the Chairman.

8.—SPEECHES.

No member shall be allowed to speak more than once upon any subject before the meeting, unless in Committee, or on a point of order, or explanation, except the mover of the Original Motion. But on amendment being moved, any member, even though he has spoken on the Original Motion, may speak again

on the amendment. No member shall speak for more than ten minutes at one time. Members wishing to raise points of order or explanation must first obtain the permission of the Chairman, and must rise immediately the alleged breach has occurred. Any member may formally second any motion or amendment and reserve his speech until a later period in the debate.

9.—MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS.

The first proposition on any particular subject shall be known as the Original Motion, and all succeeding propositions on that subject shall be called amendments. Every motion or amendment must be moved and seconded by members actually present at the meeting before they can be discussed, and, wherever possible, should be set forth in writing. It is permissible for a member to make his speech first and conclude with a motion. When an amendment is moved to an Original Motion no further amendment shall be discussed until the first amendment is disposed of. (Notice of any further amendment must be given before the first amendment is put to the vote.)

10.—SUBSTANTIVE MOTIONS.

If an amendment be carried, it displaces the Original Motion and itself becomes the substantive motion, whereupon any further amendment relating to any portion of the substantive motion may be moved, provided it is consistent with the business and has not been covered by an amendment or motion which has been previously rejected. After the vote on each succeeding amendment has been taken, the surviving proposition shall be put to the vote as the main question, and if carried shall then become a resolution of the meeting.

11.—RIGHT OF REPLY.

The mover of the Original Motion shall, if no amendment be moved, have the right to reply at the close of the debate upon such motion. When an amendment is moved he shall be entitled to speak thereon in accordance with Standing Order No. 8, and at the close of the debate on such amendment shall reply to the discussion, but shall introduce no new matter. The question shall then be put to the vote immediately, and under no circumstances shall any further discussion be allowed once the question has been put from the Chair. The mover of an amendment shall not be entitled to reply.

12.—WITHDRAWALS OR ADDITIONS.

No motion or amendment which has been accepted by the Chair shall be withdrawn without the unanimous consent of the meeting. Neither shall any addendum or rider be added to a motion which has once been accepted by the Chair without such full consent. Should any member dissent, the addendum must be proposed and seconded, and treated as an ordinary amendment.

3.—CLOSING DEBATE.

The motions for the previous question, next business, or the closure, may be moved and seconded only by members who have not previously spoken at any time during the debate. No speeches shall be allowed on such motions. In the event of the closure being carried, the mover of the Original Motion shall have the right to reply in accordance with Standing Order 11, before the question is put. Should any one of the motions mentioned in this Standing Order be defeated, ... minutes shall elapse before it can be accepted again by the Chairman, unless he is of the opinion that the circumstances have materially altered in the meantime.

14.—ADJOURNMENT.

Any member who has not already spoken during the debate may move the adjournment of the question under discussion, or of the meeting, but must confine his remarks to that question, and must not discuss any other matter. The mover of the motion upon which the adjournment has been moved, shall be allowed the right to reply on the question of the adjournment, but such reply shall not prejudice his right of reply on his own motion. In the event of such motion being lost it shall not be moved again, except in accordance with Standing Order 13.

15.—VOTING.

The voting shall be by show of hands, except where a ballot vote is specified by the General Rules. Where required by such rules, or where deemed necessary by the Chairman, two scrutineers or tellers shall be appointed by the Chairman. The Chairman shall not vote on any question, unless there is an equal number of votes, when he shall have a casting vote.

16.—VOTING IN COMMITTEE.

Where a difference of opinion on a proposition at a meeting of any Committee occurs, a vote shall be taken, and the names of those voting for and against, and of those abstaining from voting, shall be stated in the Minutes.

17.—NOTICE OF MOTION.

Notices of motion shall be sent to the Secretary in writing not less than.....days before the meeting at which they are to be discussed. Such motions shall be placed upon the Agenda in the order in which they are received by the Secretary.

18.—RESCINDING A RESOLUTION.

No resolution shall be rescinded or amended at the same meeting at which it is passed. days notice of its rescindment or amendment must be given, but the resolution shall not be rescinded or amended unless by the consent of two-thirds of the delegates present at the meeting when it is considered.

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